



IS HE MAN...OR GHOST?



JUNE-JULY
NO. 6

10c

THE PHANTOM STRANGER

ONLY THE
PHANTOM STRANGER
KNEW THE TERRIBLE
SECRET OF
**"The DOORWAY
in the SKY!"**

--AND HE WOULDN'T
REVEAL IT UNTIL HE
HAD SEALED THE
ENTRANCE FOR
ALL TIME!

**PHANTOM
STRANGER--**
CLOSE THE DOOR!
THOSE SKY-MONSTERS
ARE TRYING TO COME
DOWN TO EARTH!



NOW

MORE THAN EVER-

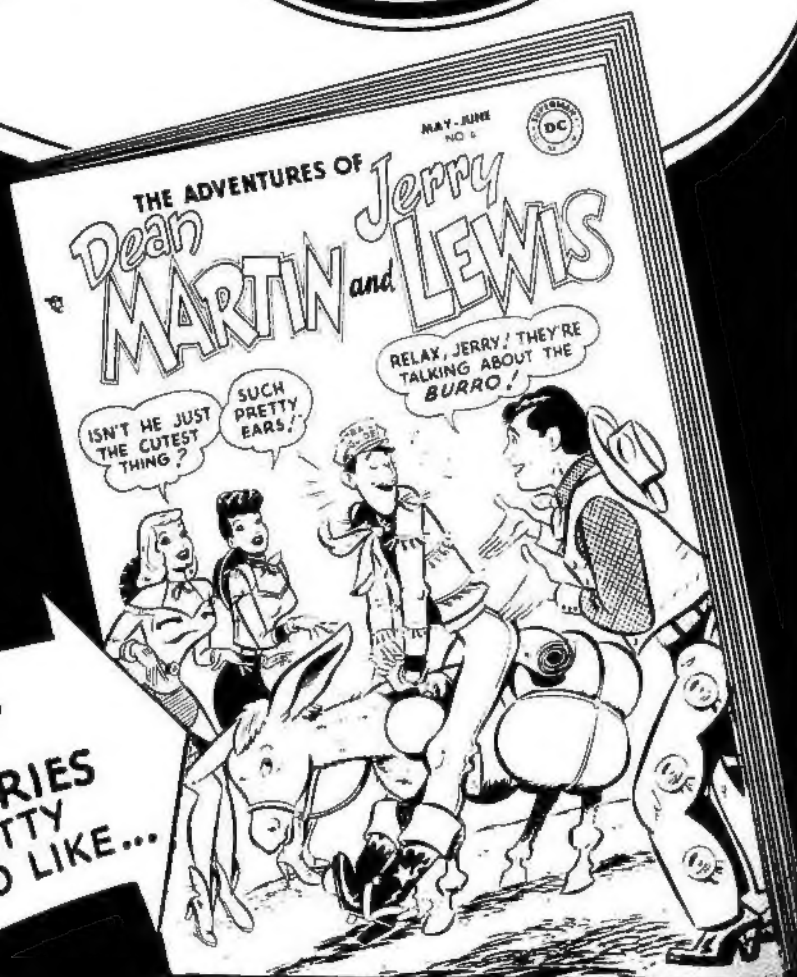
**THIS
FAMOUS SYMBOL**

ON THE COVER OF
ANY COMICS
MAGAZINE IS **YOUR**
GUARANTEE OF THE
BEST IN COMICS
READING



YES, WITH SO
MANY DIFFERENT
TITLES ON THE
NEWSSTANDS,
SOMETIMES IT'S
HARD TO CHOOSE
A MAGAZINE
YOU'RE **SURE** TO
LIKE, BUT PEOPLE
WHO KNOW COMICS
BEST **KNOW** THAT
THE D-C SYMBOL
ALWAYS MEANS
A **GOOD**
MAGAZINE!

*For Example,
IF YOU LIKE
HUMOROUS STORIES
YOU'RE PRETTY
SURE TO LIKE...*



THE PHANTOM STRANGER

BY AN ANCIENT SECRET
RITUAL, SHE SOUGHT
TO REMOVE AN AGE —
OLD CURSE — BUT
ONLY SUCCEEDED IN
MAKING THE DREADFUL
CURSE COME TRUE!

The **GHOSTS**
IN THE
LOCKED
ROOM!



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IN HIS HOME, MILLIONAIRE IRA PRENTISS ACCUSES HIS SECRETARY OF A BOLD AND STARTLING THEFT...

AND I ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO HAVE KEYS TO THE ROOM WHERE I KEPT THE FABULOUS BABYLONIAN JEWELS! I RETURNED THIS MORNING FROM MY COUNTRY ESTATE -- TO FIND THE JEWELS GONE!

WAIT!

I DID GO INTO THE BABYLON ROOM LAST NIGHT, MR. PRENTISS -- AGAINST YOUR ORDERS! BUT, I DID IT FOR **YOUR** SAFETY! PLEASE LET ME EXPLAIN!

YOUR EXPLANATION BETTER BE A GOOD ONE, YOUNG WOMAN!

FROM MY RESEARCH INTO THE WORLD OF THE SUPERNATURAL, I LEARNED THAT THE BABYLONIAN JEWELS THREATENED EVIL--AGAINST WHOMEVER POSSESSED THEM! I DECIDED TO TRY TO REMOVE THE ANCIENT CURSE--TO SAVE MR. PRENTISS!

"AS WITNESSES, I INVITED TWO TRUSTWORTHY MEN HERE LAST NIGHT! ONE OF THEM WAS HUGH CRILEY, PRESIDENT OF THE **DOUBTERS SOCIETY**..."

LET ME WARN YOU RIGHT OFF THAT MY SOCIETY EXISTS IN ORDER TO EXPOSE FAKE OCCULT PERFORMANCES!

THAT'S WHY I WANT YOU HERE--SO THAT THERE CAN BE NO CHANCE OF TRICKERY!

"THE OTHER WITNESS WAS EVEN MORE FAMOUS--NONE OTHER THAN THE **PHANTOM STRANGER**!"

SO YOU INTEND TO SUMMON UP THE PREHISTORIC GODS OF BABYLON, MISS BARTON?

FOR MY EMPLOYER'S SAKE, I MUST ATTEMPT IT, **PHANTOM STRANGER**!

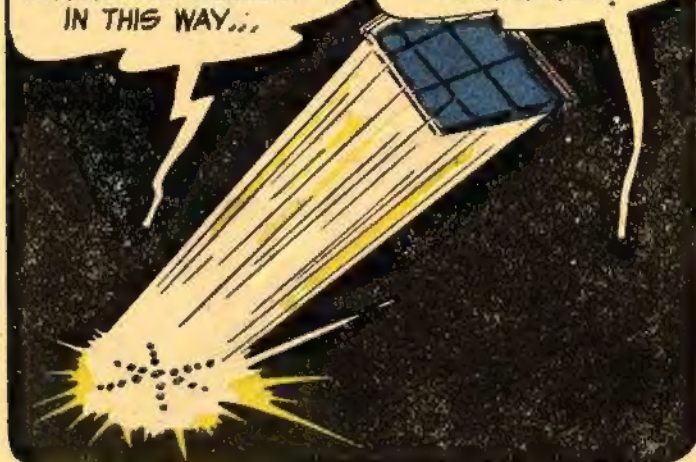
"I BOLTED THE HEAVY DOORS OF THE BABYLONIAN ROOM BEHIND US! NO ONE ELSE COULD POSSIBLY ENTER..."

ACCORDING TO AN AGE-OLD MAGICAL RITE, GENTLEMEN--THESE ANCIENT GEMS, ARRANGED IN A CERTAIN MANNER, WILL DRAW INTO THIS ROOM THE SPIRITS OF THEIR ORIGINAL OWNERS--THE GODS OF BABYLON THEMSELVES!

"PUT OUT THE LIGHTS. THE MOON SHONE DOWN THROUGH A WINDOW ON THE GEMS..."

THE RITUAL REQUIRES THAT THE MOONLIGHT STRIKE THE JEWELS IN THIS WAY...

LOOK! SOMETHING APPEARING IN THE DARKNESS!



"I RECOGNIZED THE FOREMOST AS THE FEARFUL UTU, THE BABYLONIAN SUN-GOD! I COULD BARELY SPEAK..."

I BESEECH YOU--REMOVE THE CURSE FROM THESE JEWELS!

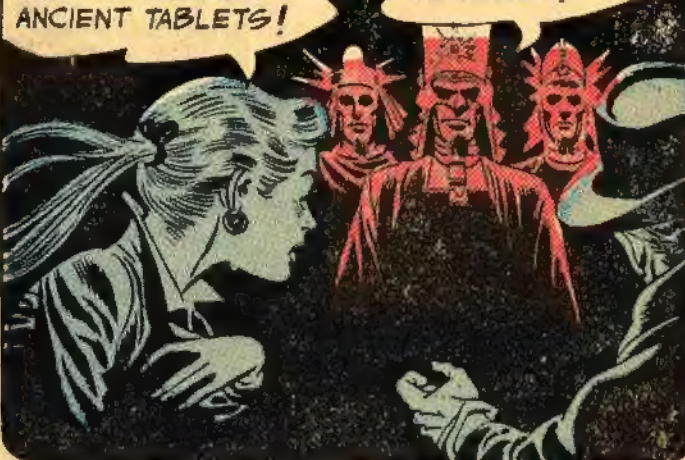
THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO DO THAT, FOOLISH MORTAL!



"THE PHANTOM STRANGER AND I WHIRLED... TO SEE THE UNCANNY FIGURES RIGHT BEHIND US..."

THE GODS OF BABYLON--JUST AS THEY APPEAR ON ANCIENT TABLETS!

WHY HAVE YOU MORTALS SUMMONED US HERE?



THESE JEWELS ARE OURS! THEY WERE STOLEN FROM US--LONG AGO! NOW WE WILL TAKE THEM BACK...

TAKING THE JEWELS? NO! YOU MUSTN'T! PHANTOM STRANGER--STOP THEM!



"THE PHANTOM STRANGER TRIED TO REACH UTU-- BUT A SUPERNATURAL FORCE STRUCK HIM DOWN!"

UNHHH... SOME POWER FROM THOSE EYES-- MAKING MY MIND REEL...

I'M ROOTED TO THE SPOT! CAN'T MOVE...



"AFTER MOMENTS THAT SEEMED AN ETERNITY, I DRAGGED MYSELF TO THE LIGHT SWITCH..."

THE JEWELS ARE GONE!

AND--THE DOOR IS STILL BOLTED!

DOORS ARE NO BARRIERS TO GHOSTS, MR. CRILEY!



IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, GET MR. CRILEY HERE, OFFICER! HE'LL VERIFY MY STORY!

I'LL DO THAT RIGHT NOW! WE'LL NEED HIM AS A CORROBORATING WITNESS ANYHOW!

SHORTLY AFTER... AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE DOUBTERS SOCIETY ARRIVES ON THE SCENE...

MISS BARTON'S ACCOUNT IS CORRECT AS SHE SAW IT, OFFICER-- BUT FROM A SCIENTIFIC VIEWPOINT, IT'S ALL WRONG IN DETAIL! NOW I'LL TELL YOU WHAT **REALLY** HAPPENED LAST NIGHT...



"WHEN MISS BARTON PLACED THE ANCIENT GEMS ON THE TABLE, SHE UNWITTINGLY SET UP A UNIQUE FORCE..."

"THE NEXT MOMENT... THE LIGHT VIBRATIONS REACHED A MAXIMUM, AND PIERCED A HOLE IN THE INVISIBLE BARRIER SEPARATING OUR WORLD... FROM A NEIGHBORING DIMENSION!"

AN ODD BLUR OVER THOSE JEWELS! IT--IT'S AS IF THE LIGHT FROM THE MOON IS BEING SPEEDED UP ON THEIR POLISHED SURFACES--FASTER THAN LIGHT OUGHT TO GO!



THOSE CREATURES--THEY'RE NOT LIKE THE GODS OF BABYLON AT ALL! THEY'RE A DIFFERENT FORM OF LIFE--FROM ANOTHER SPACE DIMENSION!



"WITH AMAZING INTELLIGENCE, THE ALIEN BEINGS SWIFTLY SIZED UP THE SITUATION..."

"AS THE **PHANTOM STRANGER** DARTED FORWARD, ONE OF THE CREATURES HELD UP A TINY, PENCIL-LIKE OBJECT..."

THESE JEWELS OPENED THE BARRIER BETWEEN OUR WORLD AND THIS ONE! WE MUST NEVER ALLOW THAT TO HAPPEN AGAIN!

THEY'RE TAKING THE JEWELS! **PHANTOM STRANGER--STOP THEM!**



SOME SUPER-SCIENTIFIC RAY... ROBBING ME OF MY SENSES!

CAN'T MOVE!





PHANTOM STRANGER



"THE ALIEN BEINGS WITHDREW... AND THE INVISIBLE OPENING BETWEEN OUR TWO WORLDS CLOSED FOREVER..."



THE JEWELS ARE GONE!

--THE DOOR IS STILL BOLTED HERE ON THE INSIDE!

"AND THAT, MR. PRENTISS, IS THE REAL TRUTH BEHIND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF YOUR FABULOUS JEWELS..."

THEY WERE TAKEN BY CREATURES FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION--

I'M SORRY TO DIS-AGREE WITH YOU, MR. CRILEY! THAT IS **NOT** WHAT HAPPENED...



THE **PHANTOM STRANGER**! BUT--YOU WEREN'T HERE A MOMENT AGO! WHY DIDN'T WE SEE YOU COME IN? AND--HOW COULD YOU KNOW WHAT CRILEY JUST TOLD US?

I HAVE MY METHODS, OFFICER...



NOW, GENTLEMEN, I WILL GIVE YOU **MY** ACCOUNT OF WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT! IT DIFFERS FROM BOTH THE **OCCULT** AND THE **ULTRA-SCIENTIFIC** VERSIONS GIVEN BY ALICE BARTON AND HUGH CRILEY! IN A WAY, IT'S A MUCH MORE **SIMPLE** EXPLANATION OF THE STRANGE AFFAIR...



"THE VISITORS WHO SUDDENLY APPEARED IN THE ROOM **DID** LOOK LIKE THE ANCIENT GODS OF BABYLON..."



I DON'T KNOW WHERE THOSE CREATURES CAME FROM--BUT I CAN'T LET THEM TAKE THOSE PRECIOUS JEWELS!

PHANTOM STRANGER--STOP THEM!

"I NEVER REACHED THE TABLE--FOR A VERY GOOD REASON! IN THE DARKNESS, I WAS **SLUGGED FROM BEHIND!**"



MY HEAD! UHHH...

HURRY! TAKE THESE JEWELS!

"I COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN UNCONSCIOUS FOR A FEW MOMENTS! WHEN I AWOKE..."

"INSTINCT WARNED ME TO LOSE NO TIME! I DASHED OUTSIDE AND CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF THE CAR ROUNDING A CORNER..."

THE DOOR IS STILL BOLTED!

A CAR... STARTING OFF... FROM IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE!

MUSTN'T LOOSE SIGHT OF IT! I'LL FOLLOW IT TO ITS DESTINATION...

"ALTHOUGH I COULD HAVE OVERTAKEN THE CAR IN A MOMENT, I PREFERRED TO TRAIL IT ACROSS THE CITY... UNTIL..."

"INSIDE THE HOUSE... A MOMENT LATER..."

IT'S STOPPING IN FRONT OF THAT HOUSE! NOW'S THE TIME TO ACT!

WHAT A HAUL!

LEAVE IT IN THE BAG TILL THE BOSS GETS HERE! THAT MUST BE HIM NOW!

THE PHANTOM STRANGER!

STOP GAWKIN' AT HIM! SHOOT HIM!

"I DROVE TO MY KNEES... AND THREW UP ONE HAND! MY FINGERS FOUND THE LIGHT SWITCH NEAR THE DOOR..."

HEY! HE TURNED OUT THE LIGHTS!

HOLD YOUR FIRE-- OR WE'LL PLUG EACH OTHER!

CLICK!

"IN THE DARKNESS, I COULD HIT ANYONE THAT CAME NEAR ME..."



"BUT THE NEXT SECOND... A HAPHAZARD SWEEP OF A GUNBUTT CAUGHT ME A GLANCING BLOW..."



"I WAS ONLY STUNNED, HOWEVER! AND BY CHANCE, I FELL NEXT TO THE THUG I HAD KNOCKED OUT..."



"AS THE LIGHTS CAME ON, I SPRANG UP..."

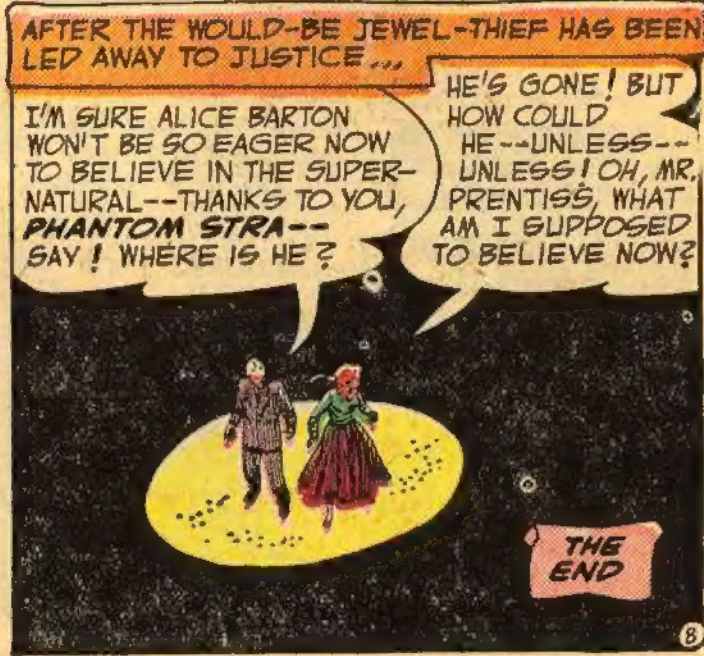


"THE THREE THIEVES WHO MASQUERADED AS THE GODS OF BABYLON ARE IN THE HANDS OF THE POLICE NOW..."



IT WAS SO SIMPLE AND OBVIOUS, NO ONE THOUGHT OF IT! SOMEONE *INSIDE* LET THEM IN! THE SAME PERSON WHO STRUCK ME DOWN FROM BEHIND... AND BOLTED THE DOOR AGAIN AFTER THE THIEVES HAD SLIPPED AWAY! AND THAT PERSON IS ...





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FAST FOOTWORK FOILS FOREIGN AGENT

ANOTHER JIM WISE "P-F" ADVENTURE STORY

HEY, SAM! THAT MAN'S TRYING TO WRECK A TRAIN!

I'LL FLAG DOWN THE FREIGHT. SURE GLAD JIM WISE TOLD US ABOUT "P-F's"

AND I'LL CALL THE STATE TROOPERS!

JIM WISE TELLS WHY "P-F" CANVAS SHOES HELP YOU GO FULL SPEED LONGER!

1. THE IMPORTANT "P-F" RIGID WEDGE HELPS KEEP THE WEIGHT OF THE BODY ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE NORMAL FOOT...DECREASING FOOT AND LEG MUSCLE STRAIN, INCREASING ENDURANCE.

2. SPONGE RUBBER CUSHION.

"P-F" MEANS POSTURE FOUNDATION ®

THIS RED SHIRT MAKES A GOOD STOP SIGNAL... I HOPE!

FAST FOOTWORK, BOYS. YOU SAVED OUR LIVES AND AN IMPORTANT ARMS SHIPMENT!

AND HELPED CAPTURE A DANGEROUS FOREIGN AGENT

OUR "P-F's" HELPED US GO FULL SPEED!

TAKE A TIP FROM JIM WISE!

GET YOUR "P-F" CANVAS SHOES TODAY AND SEE FOR YOURSELF HOW THEY HELP:

...LESSEN FOOT AND LEG MUSCLE STRAIN
...INCREASE ENDURANCE
...YOU GO FULL SPEED LONGER



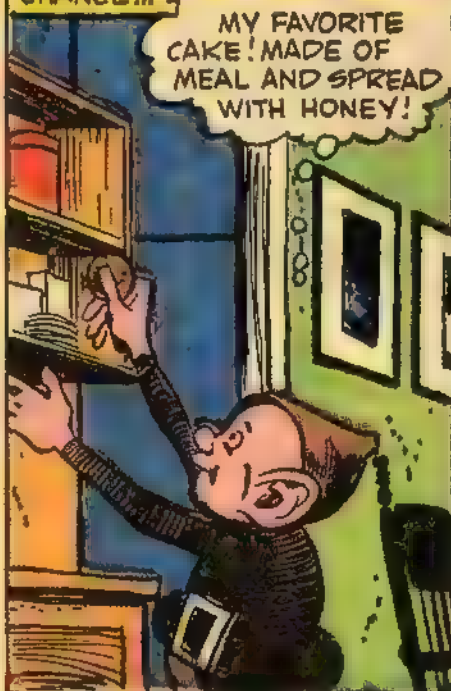
INSIST ON "P-F" CANVAS SHOES MADE ONLY BY Hood Rubber Company and B.F. Goodrich

The **BUSY** BROWNIE

THE **BROWNIE** IS A FAIRY-LIKE CREATURE DREAMED UP BY THE SCOTTISH **HIGHLAND** PEOPLE AS A KINDLY SPIRIT WHO COMES INTO THE HOUSE AT NIGHT TO PERFORM ANY WORK THAT MIGHT REMAIN TO BE DONE...

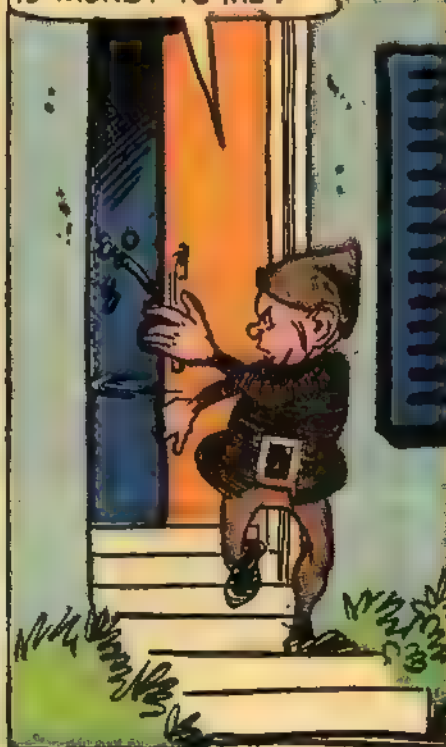


ALTHOUGH THE **BROWNIE** IS FORBIDDEN TO RECEIVE MONEY FOR SERVICES RENDERED, IT IS PERMISSABLE TO PREPARE EATING TREATS FOR HIM, WHICH MUST BE PLACED CAREFULLY WHERE HE MIGHT FIND THEM BY CHANCE...



SHOULD A MONETARY REWARD BE LEFT FOR THE **BROWNIE**, HE WILL QUIT THE HOUSE AND NEVER RETURN...

BAH! OF WHAT EARTHLY USE IS MONEY TO ME?



ADVERTISEMENT

MAGIC TRICKS

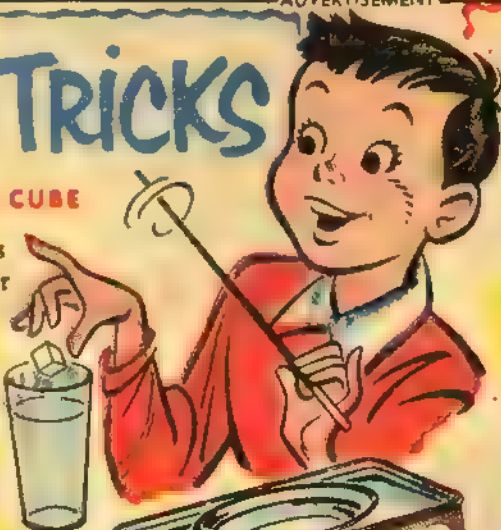
THE MAGIC SUGAR CUBE

Have somebody mark his initials on a cube of sugar with a soft black lead pencil. Then drop the cube in a glass of water. Take his hand and hold it over the glass. When the cube has dissolved the mark will be on his hand!

HOW TO DO THE TRICK:

While he is marking the sugar, wet your thumb. When you drop the cube in the glass, press your wet thumb on the mark. It'll come off on your thumb. While you hold his hand over the glass, press your thumb on his hand and the mark will come off on it.

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MIX TRICKS

Here's a slick trick to make chocolate milk like magic—and make it disappear even faster! Just use new Baker's 4 in 1. Instantly new Baker's 4 in 1 makes luscious, more chocolate-y chocolate milk that tastes so extra-special good it'll be down the hatch in a flash! Tell Mom it's the fun way to drink milk and ask her to get you the large 1-lb. economy size of new Baker's 4 in 1 Instant Cocoa Mix.



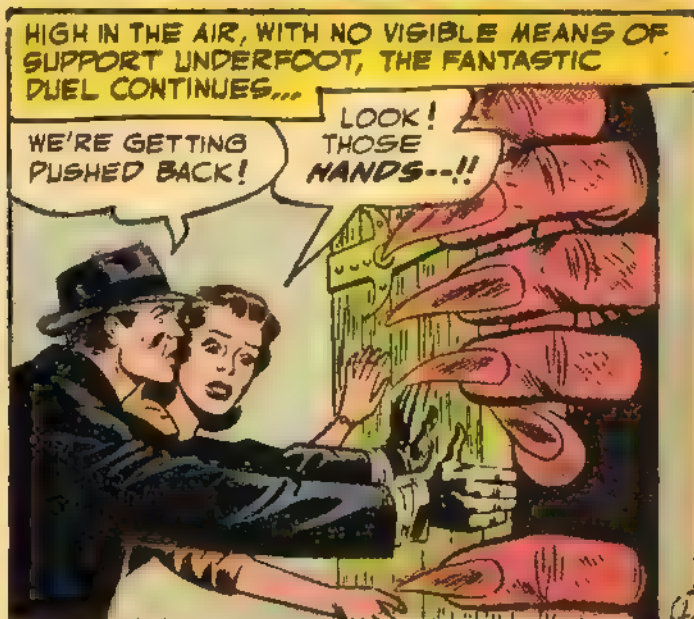
Everything **CHOCOLATE** tastes best when it's **BAKER'S!**

THE PHANTOM STRANGER

IT LOOKED
LIKE JUST AN
ORDINARY DOOR--
BUT WHAT LURKED
ON THE OTHER
SIDE OF IT...
MADE ALL THE
DIFFERENCE!



DOORWAY IN THE SKY!





THEN... AS LIGHTS ARE SNAPPED ON IN THE PRIVATE PROTECTION ROOM ASSIGNED TO PEERLESS PICTURES' DIRECTOR, BILL SLOANE...

THAT'S A GOOD TAKE! WE'LL USE IT!

THE PHANTOM STRANGER IS A NATURAL-BORN ACTOR, BILL!

THEN THAT FANTASTIC EPISODE WE HAVE JUST WITNESSED IS ONLY A SCENE IN A MOTION PICTURE! BUT WHAT IS THE PHANTOM STRANGER DOING IN HOLLYWOOD? WHY HAS HE TURNED ACTOR?... READ ON... THE SHUDDERY DETAILS WILL SOON BE REVEALED...

INTRIGUED BY THE PRESENCE OF THE PHANTOM STRANGER, A HOLLYWOOD COLUMNIST GATHERS MATERIAL FOR A FEATURE STORY ON THE PICTURE.

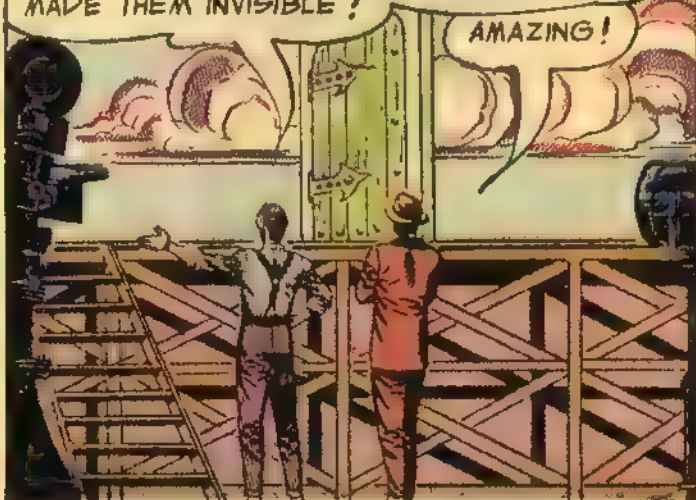
PRETTY NEAT THE WAY THEY SEEMED TO BE STANDING IN MID-AIR, CHARLEY! HOW DID YOU WORK THAT EFFECT?

TRICK PHOTOGRAPHY, GORDON! COME -- I'LL SHOW YOU!



YOU SEE, ACTUALLY THERE ARE STAIRS UP TO THE DOOR-- BUT IN PROCESSING THE FILM WE MASKED OUT THE STAIRS AND PLATFORM-- MADE THEM INVISIBLE!

AMAZING!



MEANWHILE, ON ANOTHER PART OF THE MOVIE SET...

THIS BLURB OKAY FOR THE PUBLICITY RELEASE, MR. SLOANE?

FINE, EDDIE...

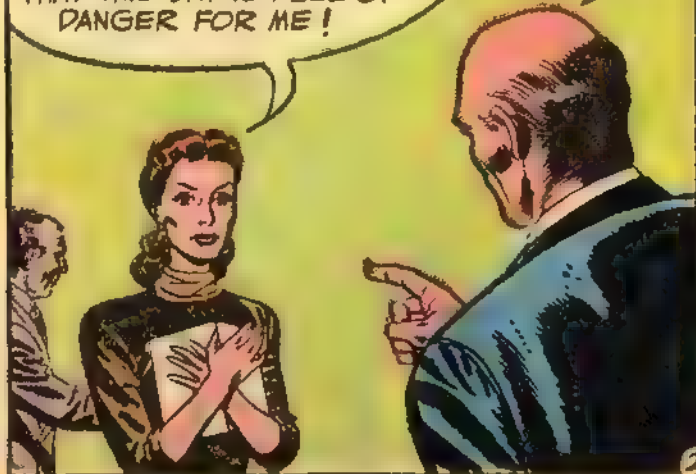
ONLY THE PHANTOM STRANGER KNEW THE TERRIBLE SECRET OF "THE DOORWAY IN THE SKY"--AND HE WOULDN'T REVEAL IT UNTIL HE HAD SEALED THE ENTRANCE FOR ALL TIME!



SOON AFTER...

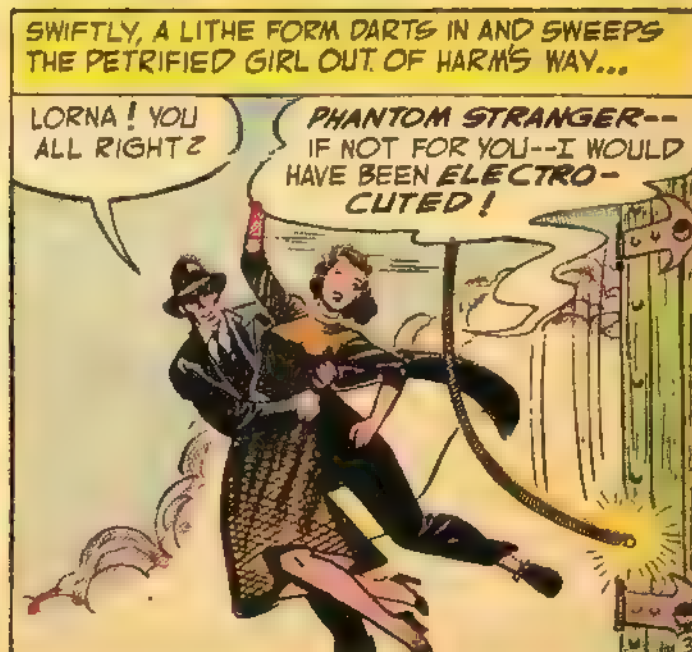
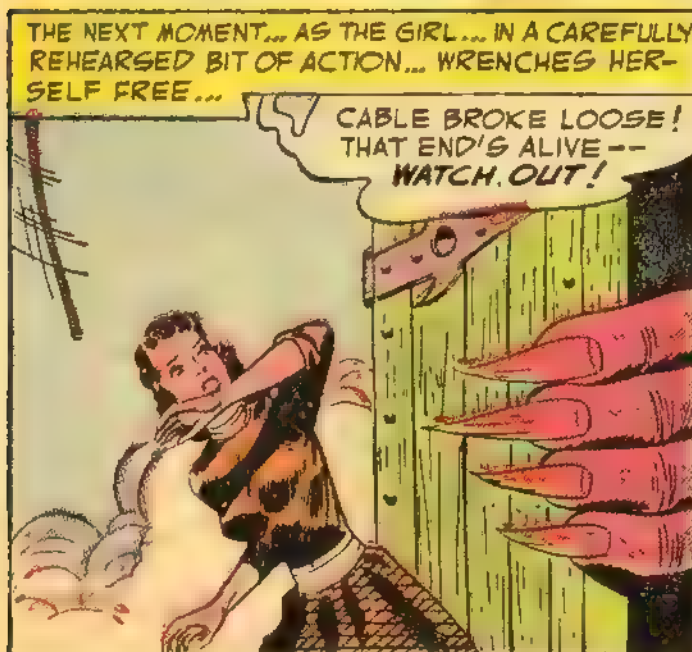
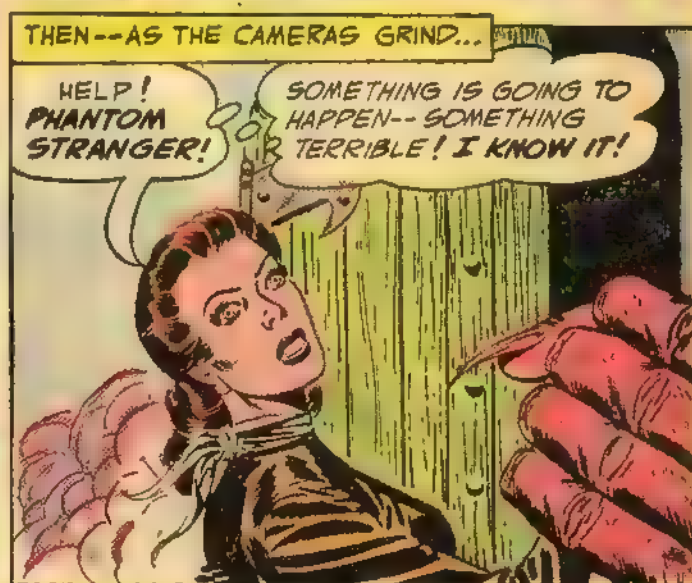
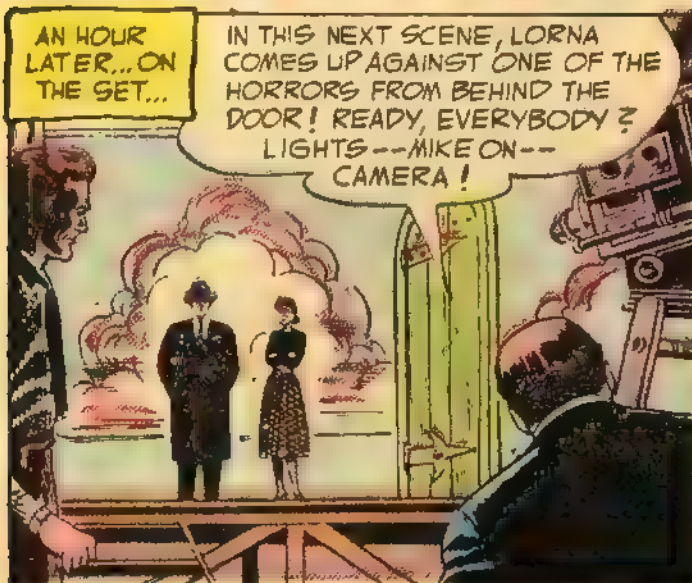
MR. SLOANE, I CAN'T GO BEFORE THE CAMERAS TODAY! I JUST CAST MY HOROSCOPE! ALL SIGNS INDICATE THAT THIS DAY IS FULL OF DANGER FOR ME!

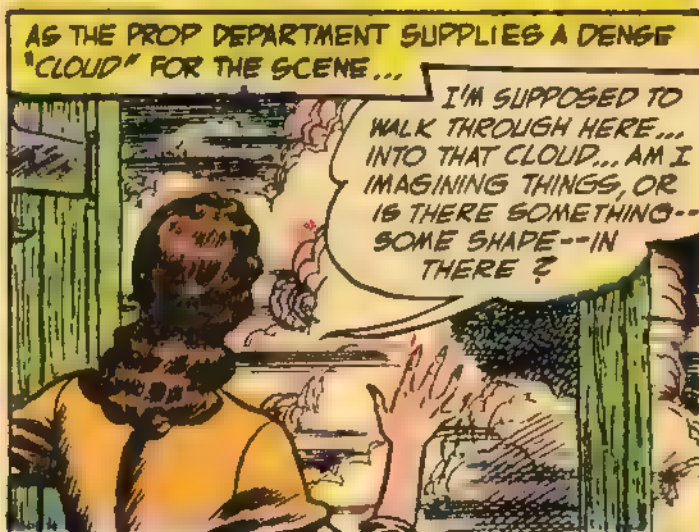
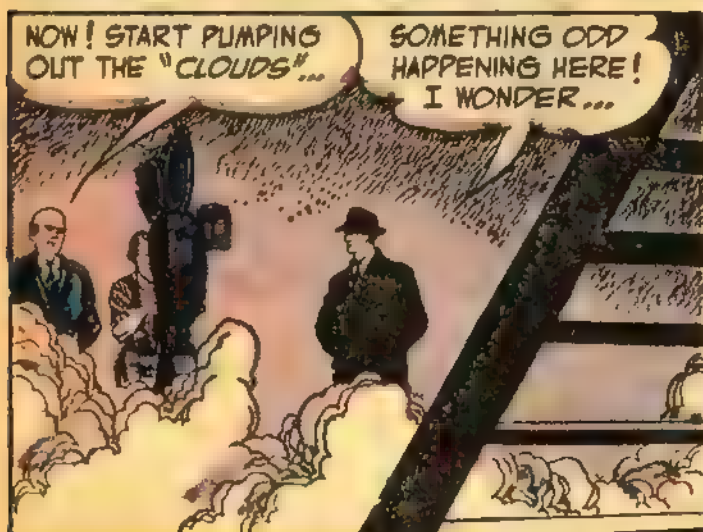
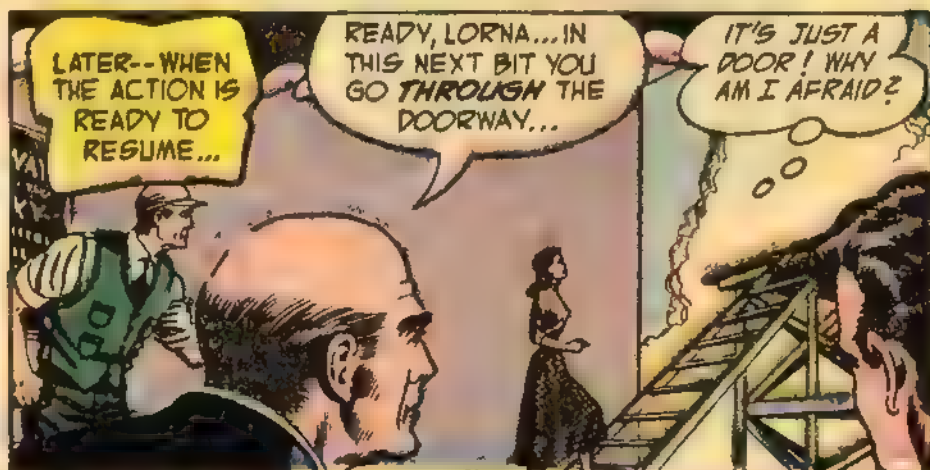
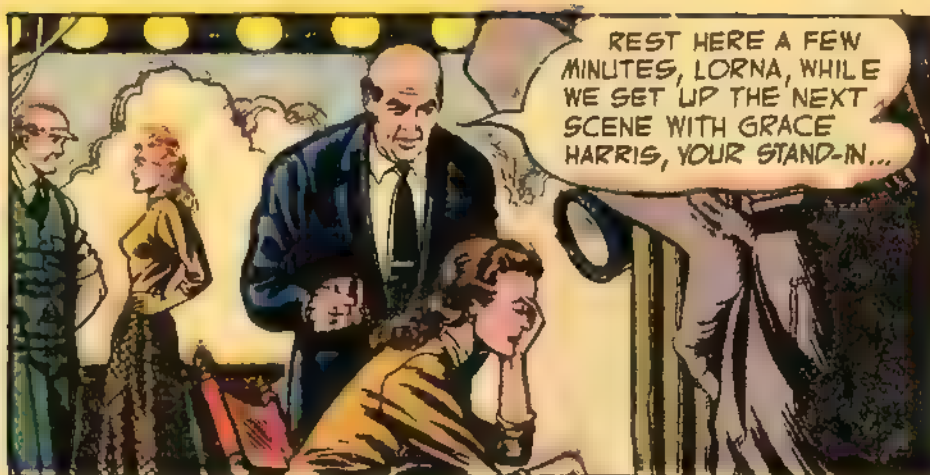
LORNA, THAT'S A LOT OF NONSENSE!

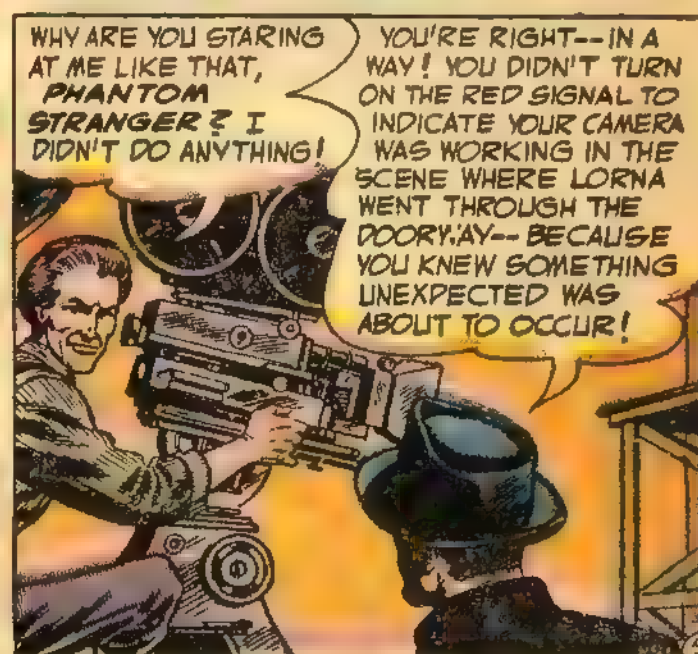
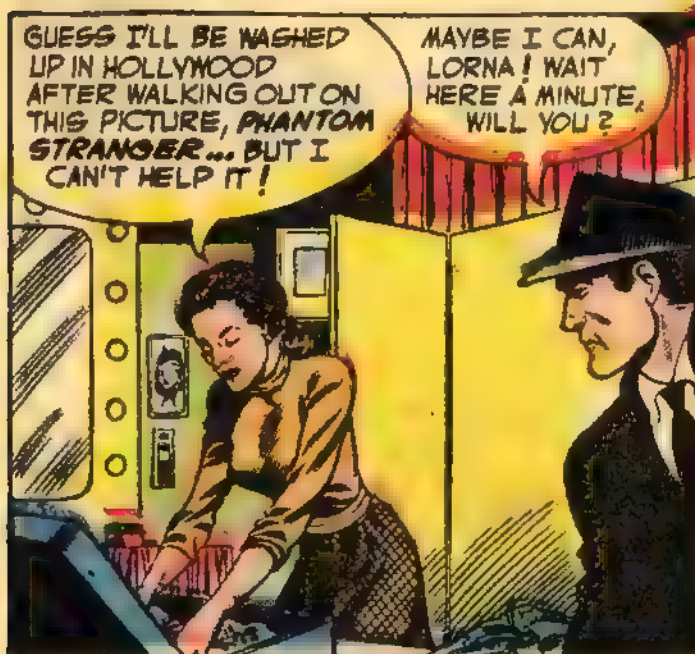
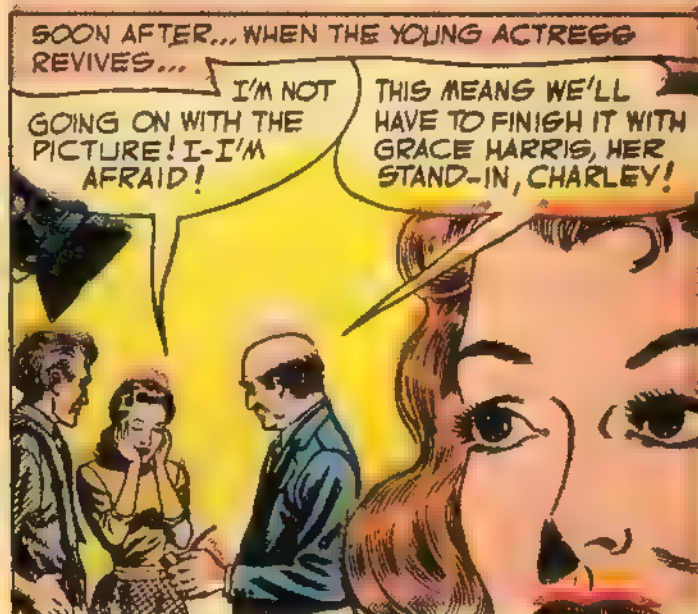
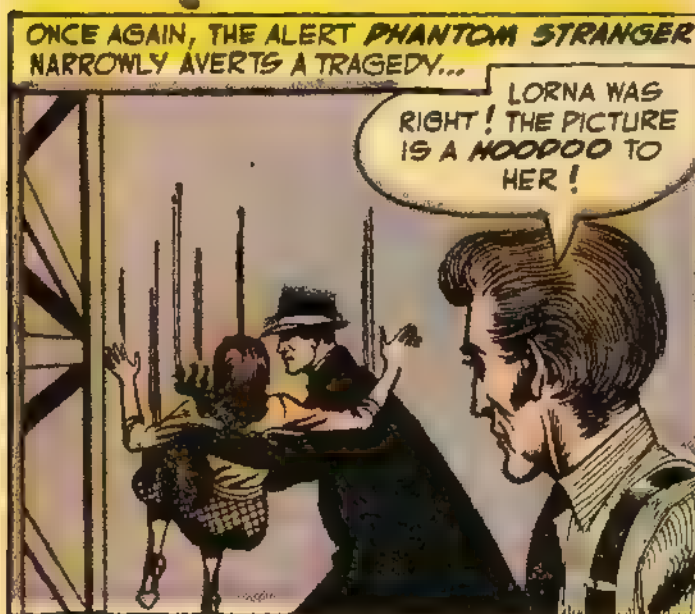
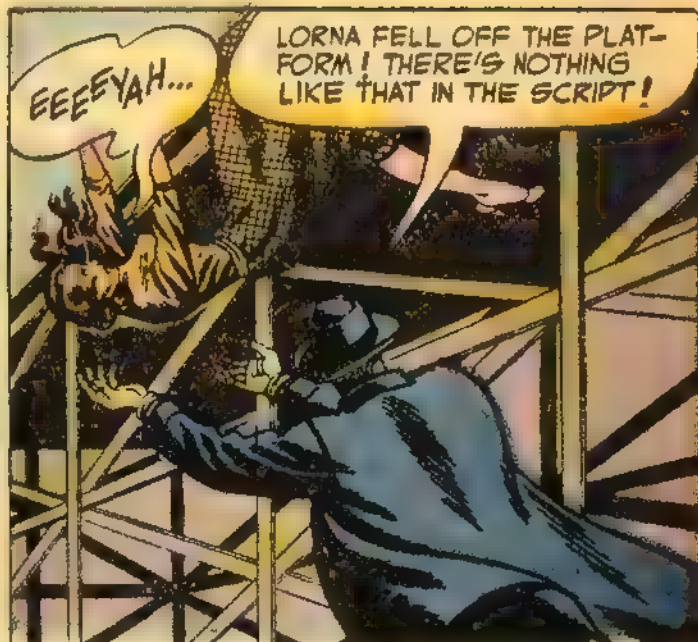
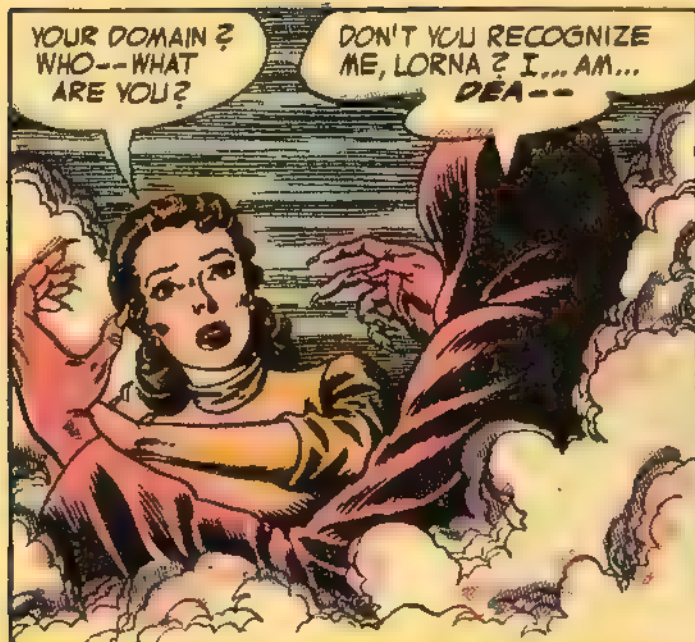




PHANTOM STRANGER









PHANTOM STRANGER



WITH A SWIFT MOVEMENT, THE MAN OF MYSTERY REACHES INTO THE CAMERA-MAN'S POCKET... AND...

AN ENVELOPE--FILLED WITH MONEY! WHO GAVE YOU THIS, CHARLEY--AND WHY?

HAND THAT BACK OR I'LL--!



PARRYING THE CAMERA-MAN'S LUNGE, THE PHANTOM STRANGER DRIVES HIS FOE TO A WALL...



I HAD ENOUGH! GRACE HARRIS PAID ME TO FRIGHTEN LORNA--SO THAT SHE WOULD GET HER ROLE AFTER LORNA QUIT! I GOT SOMEONE TO POSE AS A HOODED FIGURE IN THAT CLOUD.



THE SAME CONFEDERATE THAT LOOSENED THE CABLE CONNECTION, NO DOUBT!

LATER... AFTER THE GUILTY PARTY HAS BEEN TAKEN INTO CUSTODY...

CUT! THAT WRAPS UP THE PICTURE! LORNA, YOU WERE WONDERFUL!

YOU CAN THANK THE PHANTOM STRANGER FOR THAT, MR. SLOANE! WHY--WHERE IS HE? HE WAS HERE A MOMENT AGO!



HE'S GONE! SO THAT'S WHAT HE MEANT BY TELLING ME TO SEND HIS SALARY TO THE SOCIETY FOR OCCULT INVESTIGATIONS! THAT'S WHY HE AGREED TO APPEAR IN THE PICTURE!

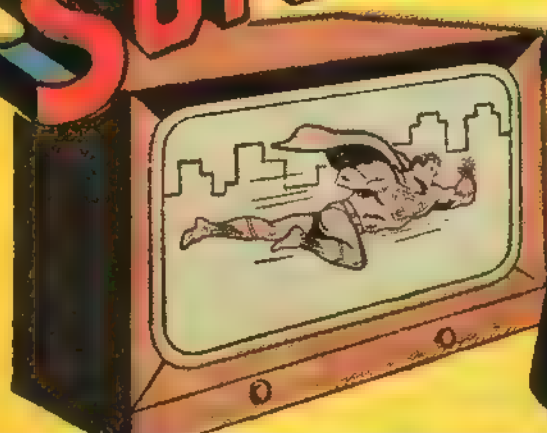
I-I'M GOING TO DONATE MY SALARY TO THE SOCIETY TOO! IN APPRECIATION FOR WHAT THE PHANTOM STRANGER DID FOR ME!



THE END

SUPERMAN IS ON TELEVISION!

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Anyone can enter—

Contest runs during April, May and June, 1953. Entries will be judged for the month in which entries are postmarked.



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1531 PRIZES IN ALL

Hey Gang!

—If you're one of the first 2,000 entrants, we'll send you absolutely free Major Colby's 32 page book "Our Fighting Jets" illustrating and describing many of the Jets in action today



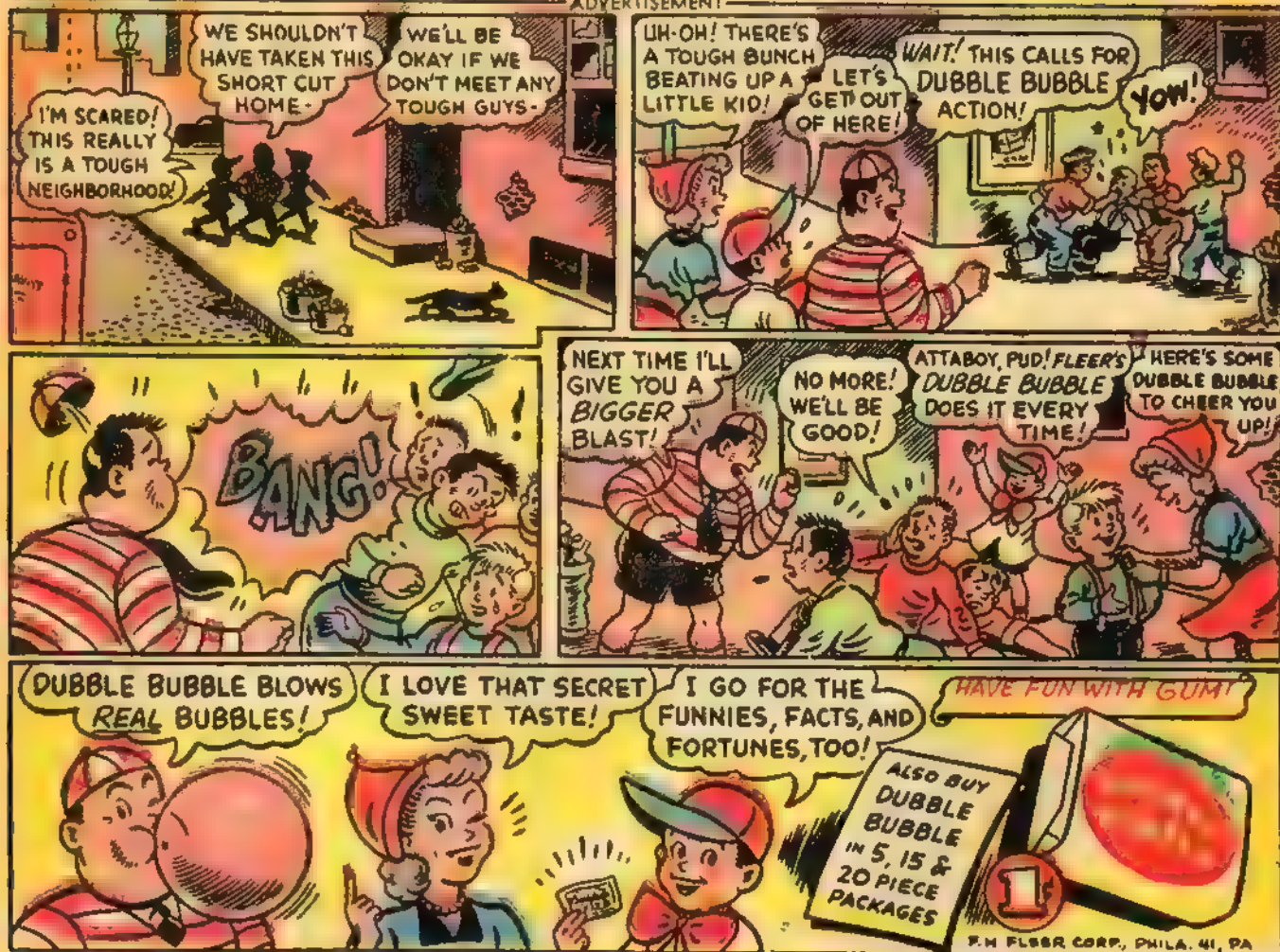
Take off! Get your entry in NOW!

Looking for good footwear? Look for the **RED BALL**

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FUNNY STUFF
GANG BUSTERS
HERE'S HOWIE
HOUSE OF MYSTERY
LEADING COMICS
LEAVE IT TO BINKY
MR. DISTRICT ATTORNEY
THE PHANTOM
STRANGER
MYSTERY IN SPACE
MUTT & JEFF
OUR ARMY AT WAR

Dr. W. W. D. SONES

Professor of Education and
Director of Curriculum Study
University of Pittsburgh

Dr. S. HARCOURT PEPPARD

Director, Essex County
Juvenile Clinic
Newark, N. J.

PETER PORKCHOPS
REAL SCREEN COMICS
REX THE WONDER DOG
SENSATION MYSTERY
STAR SPANGLED
WAR STORIES
STRANGE ADVENTURES
SUPERBOY
SUPERMAN
THE FOX & THE CROW
TOMAHAWK
WESTERN COMICS
WONDER WOMAN
WORLD'S FINEST COMICS

BE SURE
TO GET THE
LATEST ISSUE
OF
THE ADVENTURES OF
**Dean
MARTIN and
Jerry
LEWIS**
TODAY!



DEAD MAN'S BLUFF!

IF MY WATCH
DOESN'T SPEED UP,
THEY'LL HANG ME--
FOR A CRIME
I NEVER
COMMITTED!

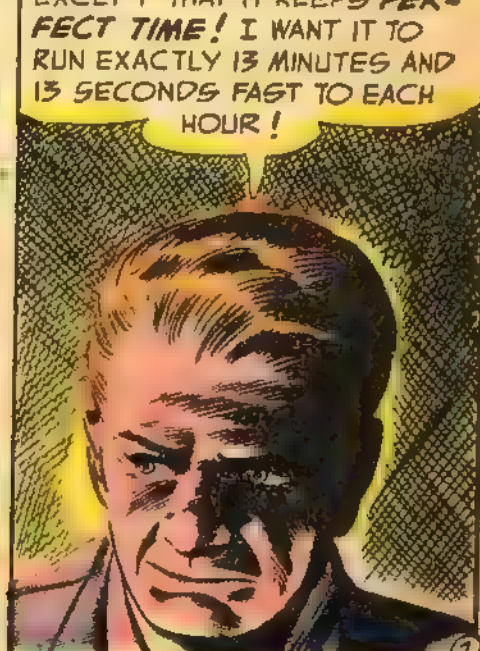
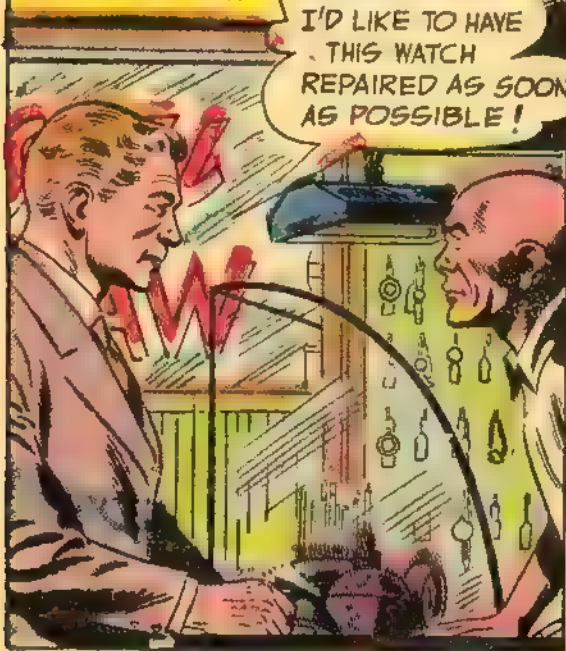
THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING WRONG
WITH THE STRANGE WATCH--IT KEPT
PERFECT TIME...AND TICKED AWAY
ITS OWNER'S DOOM!

EARLY ONE MORNING, IN A WATCH
REPAIR SHOP...

I'D LIKE TO HAVE
THIS WATCH
REPAIRED AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE!

NEVER SAW A WATCH
LIKE THAT BEFORE!
WHAT SEEMS TO BE
WRONG WITH IT?

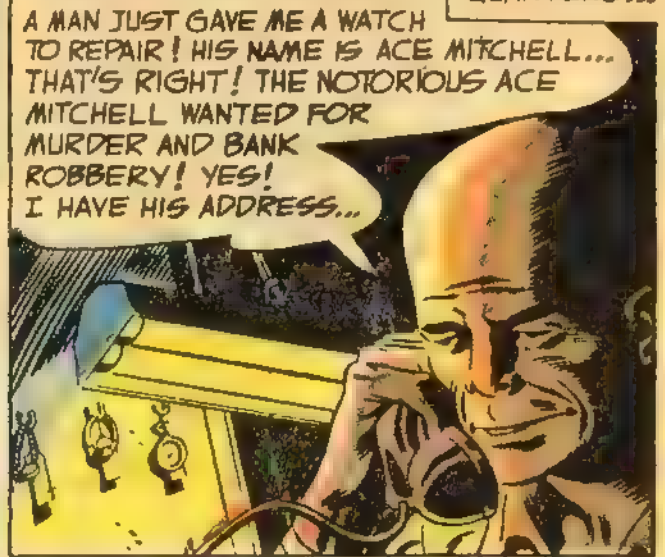
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG--
EXCEPT THAT IT KEEPS **PER-**
FECT TIME! I WANT IT TO
RUN EXACTLY 13 MINUTES AND
13 SECONDS FAST TO EACH
HOUR!



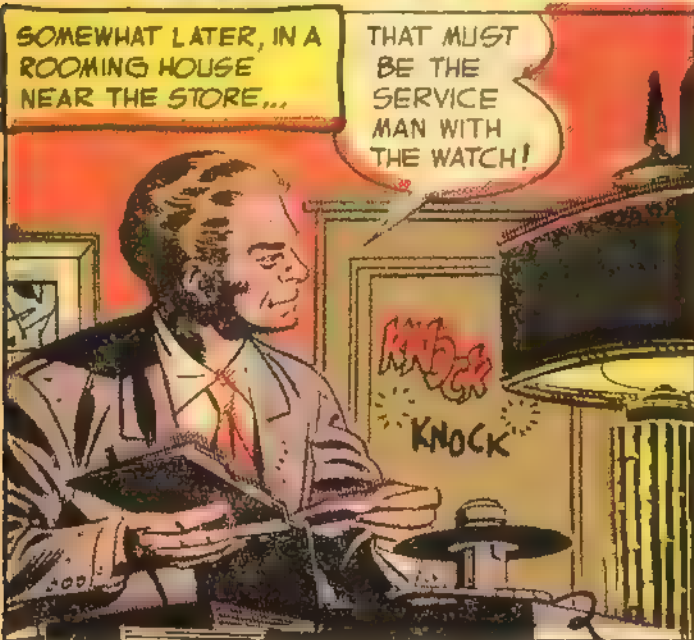


I HAVE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS! I'LL ADJUST IT RIGHT AWAY, AND DELIVER IT MYSELF!

AS THE DOOR CLOSES ON HIS VISITOR, THE WATCHMAKER PHONES POLICE HEAD-QUARTERS...



A MAN JUST GAVE ME A WATCH TO REPAIR! HIS NAME IS ACE MITCHELL... THAT'S RIGHT! THE NOTORIOUS ACE MITCHELL WANTED FOR MURDER AND BANK ROBBERY! YES! I HAVE HIS ADDRESS...



SOMEWHAT LATER, IN A ROOMING HOUSE NEAR THE STORE...

THAT MUST BE THE SERVICE MAN WITH THE WATCH!

KNOCK
KNOCK



DON'T MAKE A MOVE, MITCHELL! YOU CAN'T ESCAPE US THIS TIME! YOU'RE GOING TO HANG FOR YOUR CRIMES!

CRIMES? HANG? NO, WAIT! YOU'RE MAKING A TERRIBLE MISTAKE!



YOU MADE THE MISTAKE, MITCHELL--WHEN YOU WENT TO THE WATCH REPAIR SHOP! DIDN'T YOU KNOW THERE WAS A FIVE-STATE ALARM OUT FOR YOU?

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! I--I'M DEAD! I THOUGHT EVERYBODY KNEW THAT!



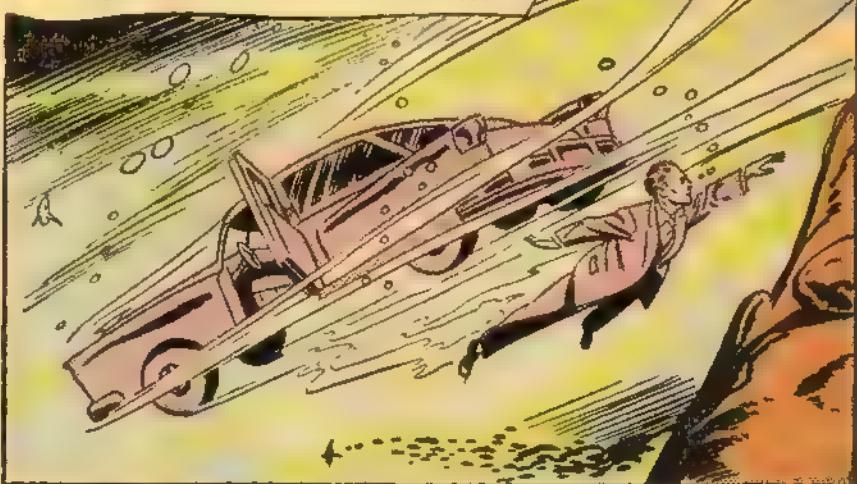
DEAD? YOU CAN'T HOPE TO GET AWAY WITH A STORY LIKE THAT!

BUT IT'S A TRUE STORY! I'M FORBIDDEN TO TELL IT, BUT THIS IS AN EMERGENCY! YOU SEE, I DON'T BELONG IN THIS WORLD AT ALL!

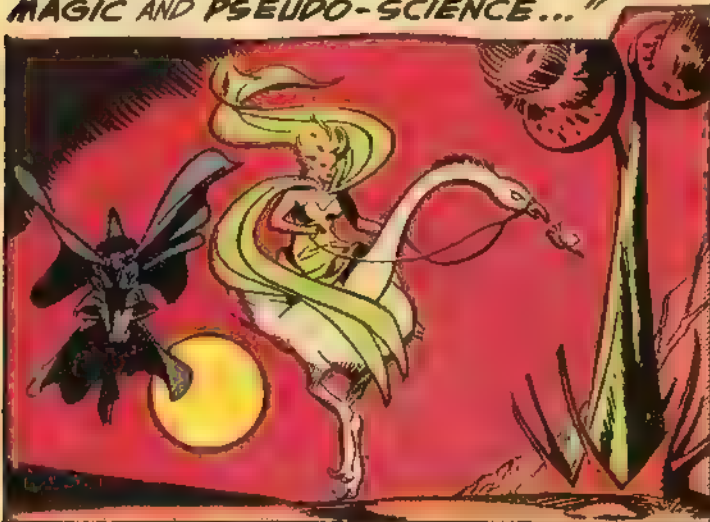
THE WORLD I COME FROM EXISTS IN THE SAME SPACE YOURS DOES, BUT SINCE WE VIBRATE AT A **FASTER RATE OF TIME** THAN YOU, WE ARE NEVER SEEN!



"OCCASIONALLY A FEW CHOSEN ONES ARE PERMITTED TO CROSS OVER INTO YOUR WORLD, BY ASSUMING THE IDENTITY OF A DEAD MAN, AT THE EXACT MOMENT OF DEATH! WHEN THE REAL BILL FARMER DROWNED, I SLIPPED INTO HIS BODY ..."



"I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS A CRIMINAL! IN OUR WORLD, WE HAVE NO SUCH PEOPLE! OURS IS A STRANGE LAND, GOVERNED BY WHAT YOU CALL HERE **MAGIC AND PSEUDO-SCIENCE** ..."



"WE CAN HAVE OR DO ANYTHING WE WISH SIMPLY BY CASTING A SPELL ..."



-- GRANT ME THE POWER OF THE **EVIL EYE** TO BRING DOOM TO MY ENEMY!

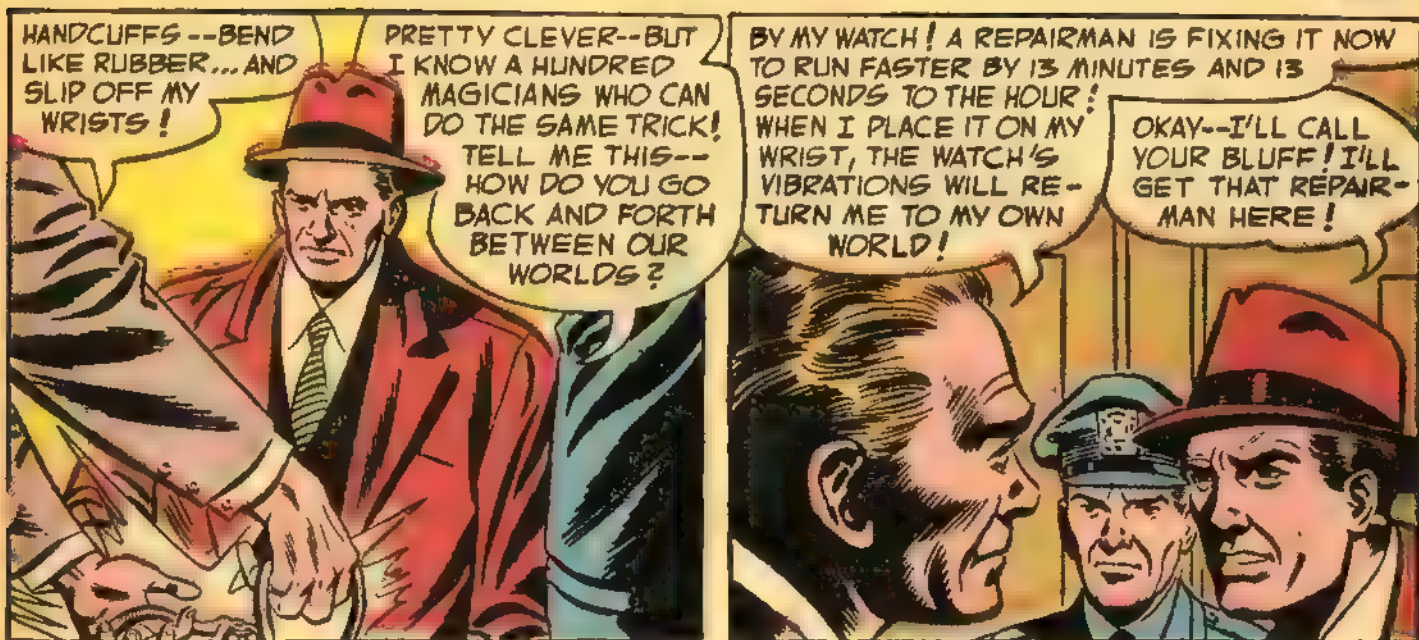
"IF I WANT TO CHANGE MY APPEARANCE, I USE A DIFFERENT CHARM, AND PRESTO! I TURN INTO A HANDSOME PRINCE! ..."



DO YOU EXPECT US TO SWALLOW A YARN LIKE THAT ?

BUT IT'S TRUE! I CAN PROVE IT--I HAVE ONE OF MY CHARMS WITH ME!







The MYSTICAL MESMER

THE students attending the Vienna medical school in the early 1850's were somewhat skeptical about one of their classmates. Franz Mesmer, they decided, was definitely not "one of the boys." Instead of following tried and tested paths in the time-honored profession of healing, Mesmer was developing fantastic theories of his own.

Take that conversation he had with Hans Burckner only the week before. Hans had been cramming for an exam, and his nose was deep in the volume on "Diseases of the Bone" when Franz had unexpectedly entered the room.

Franz took one look at the book he was studying, then walked over to the attic window and lifted the shade as high as it would go. Then, pointing one finger at the sparkling stars, he turned to Hans, and said:

"You're looking in the wrong place if you wish to learn the mysteries of health, Hans! There is where to look—to the stars!"

Hans had been so surprised at the interruption that he was at a loss what to answer. "To the stars?" he mumbled, at last.

"Yes, Hans—it is the stars that

possess the secrets of curing us, if we knew how to read them!"

Franz Anton Mesmer did not long hold to this strange theory, but it served as an indication of the mystical turn his mind was taking. And long after his death, people would remember him for his mystical learnings—if only because his name was lent to the practise that became known as—*mesmerism*.

Mesmer lost his interest in astrology after he left medical school, and developed another theory to take its place—animal magnetism. Magnetism, he now believed, contained the power to cure diseased limbs. And he experimented on dozens of hopeful patients by the ridiculously simple method of stroking affected limbs with an ordinary magnet.

But, years later, upon meeting a J. J. Gassner in Switzerland, he observed Gassner effecting cures by manipulation alone. It was this fateful meeting that caused Mesmer to drop his theories about magnets, and develop the idea that was to become his life work.

Franz Mesmer now believed that some kind of powerful occult force existed within himself—and that he could use this force to influence others. More-

over, he believed that this same force permeated the entire universe, and affected the nervous systems of men.

With firm belief in his new theories, Mesmer began to conduct seances in Vienna. To the amazement of all who scoffed at his strange ideas, and had labeled him a mad dreamer, Mesmer proceeded to roll up an impressive record of incredible cures.

But while his fame spread like wildfire, and the lame and crippled traveled hundreds of miles to attend his seances, the medical faculty of the time eyed him with jealous and suspicious glances.

At about this time the parents of three-year-old Maria Theresa von Paradies were shocked to discover that their little girl had suddenly gone blind. Panic-stricken, they rushed her to the leading physicians in the city, but none of them seemed able to diagnose her ailment. The hapless parents finally resigned themselves to the sad situation.

Little Maria Theresa, however, remained as cheerful as ever, and even expressed the desire to study piano. Her parents, anxious to please her in every possible way, at once bought a piano and engaged an instructor.

Then an amazing thing happened. Although totally blind, the child developed into a remarkable piano virtuoso, and her fame as a child prodigy soon reached the attention of the kindly Empress Maria Theresa. The Empress heard the child play and instantly pronounced her as her protegee.

This not only brought the family of the amazing child nation-wide fame, but supplied them with a substantial income. At the same time, the parents left no stone unturned to find a doctor with the skill to restore the child's

sight. The quest was endless—and seemingly hopeless.

Then they heard of the spectacular cures being effected by Dr. Mesmer. But they had also heard, from the eminent Dr. von Stoerk, that Mesmer was a fraud and a fake. When the von Paradies continued to hear glowing reports of cures, they finally resolved to take little Maria Theresa to him.

Dr. Mesmer patted little Maria on the head when he met her, and gave her a swift, cursory examination. Then he turned to her parents. Yes, he would try to restore her sight, but she must be placed entirely in his hands. The von Paradies readily agreed, and Mesmer began his treatment.

Dr. Mesmer perceived at once that there was nothing wrong with the child's optic nerve, but in her mind, and, probing deeply, he soon discovered the childish fancies that were troubling her.

At the end of two weeks, little Maria Theresa von Paradie began to see vague objects—and at the end of a month, her sight was completely restored!

It was a glorious victory for Dr. Mesmer's theories, but one which resulted in the banishment of the doctor from Vienna. The medical faculty of Vienna, incensed at the fame which the case had brought Mesmer, immediately instituted proceedings against him, leading to an order directing him to leave the city within 48 hours!

Mesmer took up his practise in Paris, where he became the rage, but here too the medical men hounded him. Impostor, charlatan, hoax, were some of the epithets flung at him, but people crowded his office.

To this day his name is a controversial one. Hoax or healer? What do you think?

STOP THAT YAWN

EVERYTIME OUR PRIMITIVE ANCESTORS YAWNED, THEY FEARED THEY WOULD LOSE THEIR BREATH AND POSSIBLY DIE--OR ALLOW AN EVIL SPIRIT TO ENTER THROUGH THE MOUTH AND CAUSE ILLNESS, PAIN, OR DEATH...



HINDUS REGARD A YAWN AS AN OMEN OF APPROACHING DANGER. TO COUNTERACT THE IMPENDING DISASTER, THEY SNAP THEIR FINGERS THREE TIMES AND CALL ON THEIR GODS FOR PROTECTION...



ACCORDING TO A WIDE-SPREAD BELIEF, WHEN TWO PERSONS YAWN SIMULTANEOUSLY, ONE WILL SOON BECOME SICK UNLESS EACH MAKES A WISH AND REPEATS THE OTHER'S NAME...



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PHANTOM STRANGER



THE PHANTOM STRANGER



THE ELVES
WERE HAPPY
THAT HUMANS
BELIEVED THEY
DIDN'T EXIST--
IT MADE THEIR
PLAN TO TAKE
OVER THE EARTH
SO MUCH
SIMPLER!

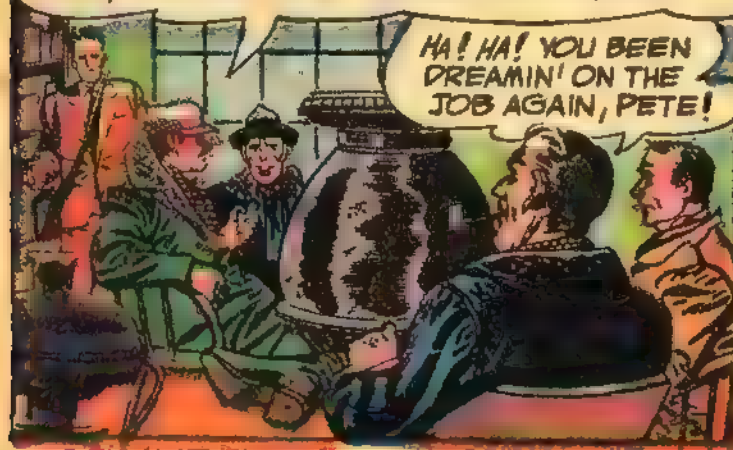
HORROR
IN
MINIATURE!



AT THE SMITH TOWNSHIP CROSSROADS STORE...

I MEAN IT, FOLKS! I'M QUITTIN' MY NIGHT—
WATCHMAN JOB AT THE IRONSIDE MINE! WHEN
I START SEEIN' **ELVES**--SCRAWNY LEGS, POP
EYES, SNICKERIN' AN' SQUEALIN' AT ME--

HA! HA! YOU BEEN
DREAMIN' ON THE
JOB AGAIN, PETE!



TIM HARLEY, I
JUST WISH YOU'D
BEEN THERE WITH YOUR
CAMERA! YOU WOULD'VE
HAD A PICTURE TO PROVE
I WASN'T DREAMIN'!

WELL, PETE, I'M
NOT DOING ANY-
THING SPECIAL
TONIGHT--SO
I'LL GO OUT
TO THE MINE WITH
MY CAMERA AND
GET YOU YOUR
PROOF--IF ANY!



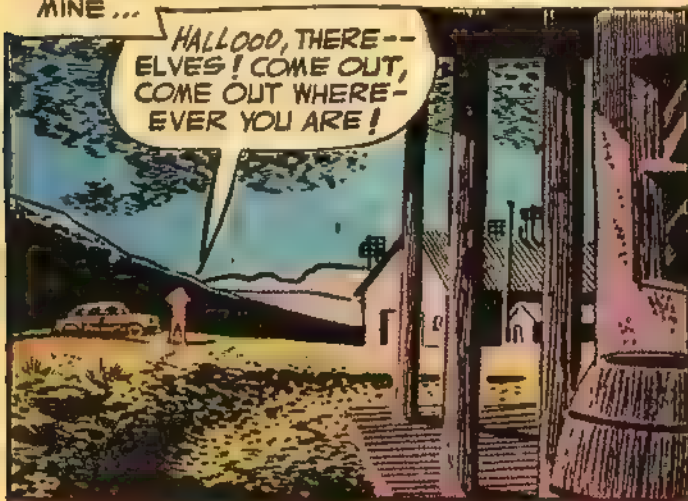


PHANTOM STRANGER



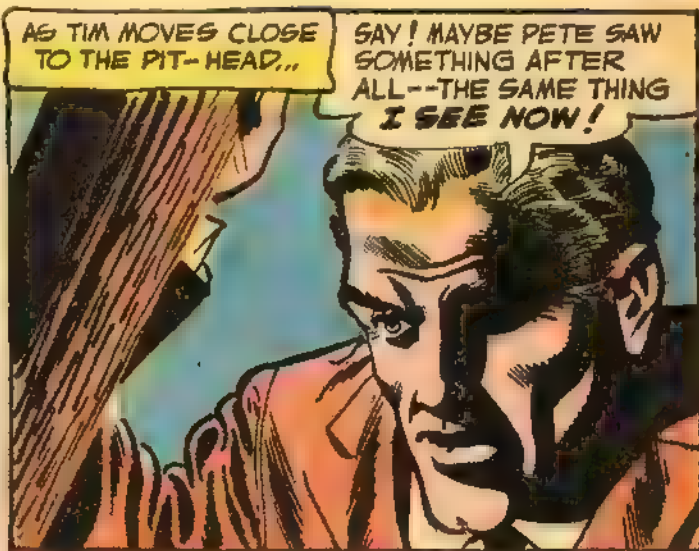
THAT NIGHT, NEAR THE SITE OF THE IRONSIDE MINE...

HALLOO, THERE--
ELVES! COME OUT,
COME OUT WHERE-
EVER YOU ARE!



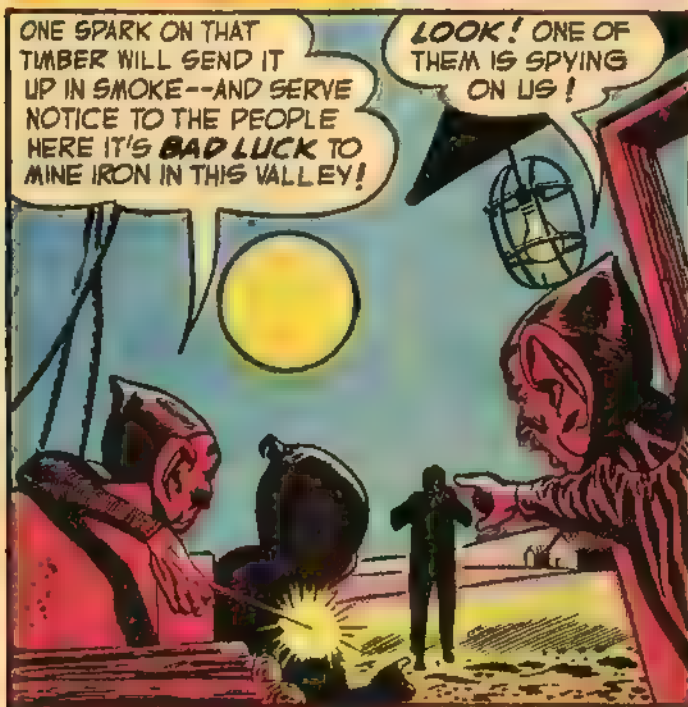
AS TIM MOVES CLOSE
TO THE PIT-HEAD...

SAY! MAYBE PETE SAW
SOMETHING AFTER
ALL--THE SAME THING
I SEE NOW!



ONE SPARK ON THAT
TIMBER WILL SEND IT
UP IN SMOKE--AND SERVE
NOTICE TO THE PEOPLE
HERE IT'S **BAD LUCK** TO
MINE IRON IN THIS VALLEY!

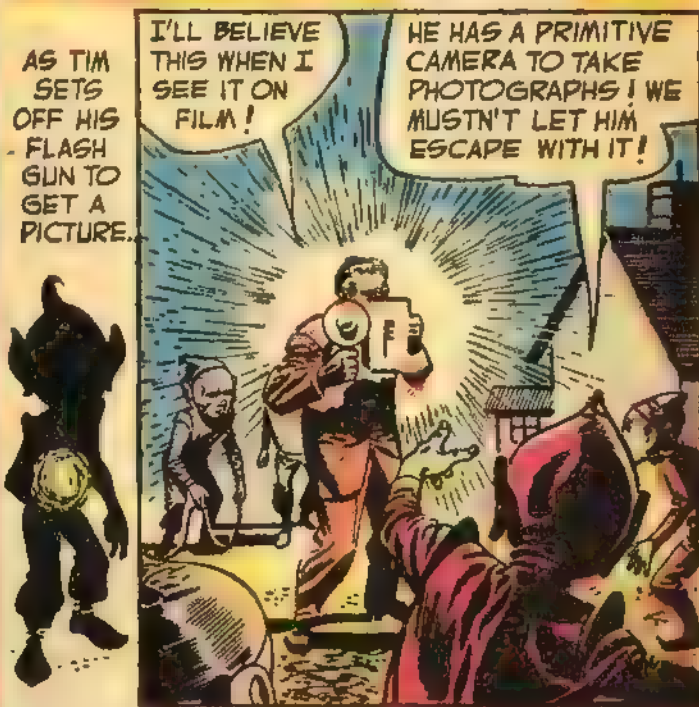
LOOK! ONE OF
THEM IS SPYING
ON US!



AS TIM
SETS
OFF HIS
FLASH
GUN TO
GET A
PICTURE...

I'LL BELIEVE
THIS WHEN I
SEE IT ON
FILM!

HE HAS A PRIMITIVE
CAMERA TO TAKE
PHOTOGRAPHS! WE
MUSTN'T LET HIM
ESCAPE WITH IT!



AS AN ELF POINTS A WAND AT HIM, TIM FEELS A
PARALYZING SHOCK...

NO PICTURES!
WE'RE CAMERA-
SHY!

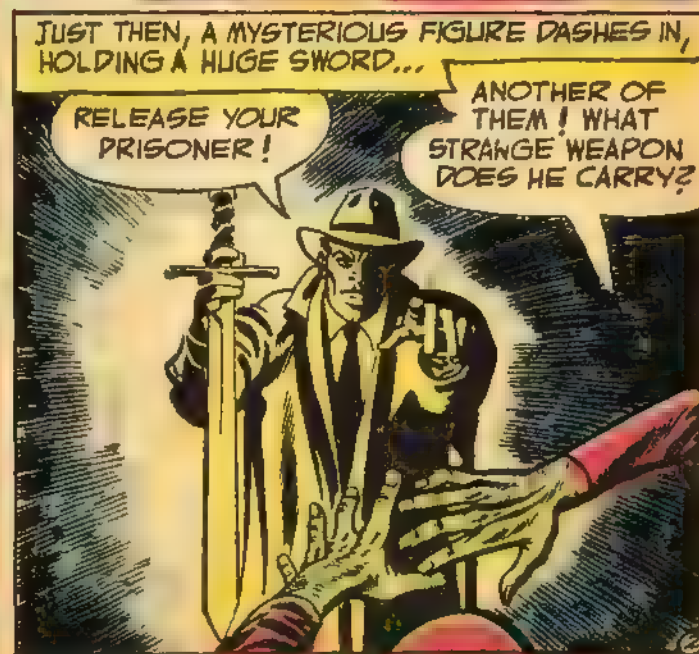
TAKE HIM
PRISONER!



JUST THEN, A MYSTERIOUS FIGURE DASHES IN,
HOLDING A HUGE SWORD...

RELEASE YOUR
PRISONER!

ANOTHER OF
THEM! WHAT
STRANGE WEAPON
DOES HE CARRY?



A SWEEP OF
THE BLADE
CUTS TIM'S
CORD...

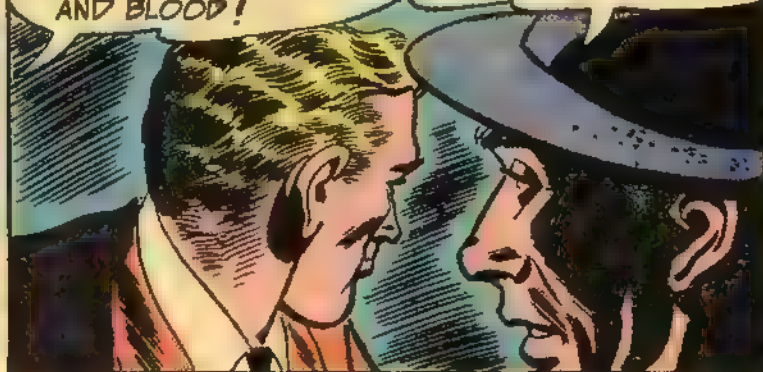
GET BACK,
ALL OF YOU!

THE POWER--
THE TERRIBLE
POWER OF
STEEL!
RUN!

THEN, AS HIS RESCUER HELPS TIM AWAY...

HALT! DO NOT BECOME
PANICKY! HE WIELDS A
STEEL WEAPON, BUT HE
HIMSELF IS ONLY FLESH
AND BLOOD!

QUICK, LET'S GET OUT
OF HERE, BEFORE THEY
GROUP THEMSELVES
AND COUNTERATTACK!



BEFORE
PURSUIT
CAN
BEGIN, TIM
AND THE
STRANGER
SPEED
AWAY...

WHEN WE GET BACK TO TOWN, WE'LL
RALLY THE PEOPLE TOGETHER AND
GO BACK THERE
AGAIN, MR.--

PEOPLE CALL ME
THE **PHANTOM
STRANGER!** AND
WHAT MAKES YOU
THINK ANYONE
WOULD BELIEVE
OUR STORY ABOUT
REAL ELVES ROAM-
ING ABOUT THE
IRONSIDE MINE?



YOU'RE RIGHT--NOBODY
BELIEVED OLD PETE AND
THEY WON'T BELIEVE ME,
EITHER! THIS IS MY HOME--
COME IN AND TALK IT OVER!

NOT NOW,
THANKS!
BUT I'LL
KEEP IN
TOUCH
WITH
YOU!

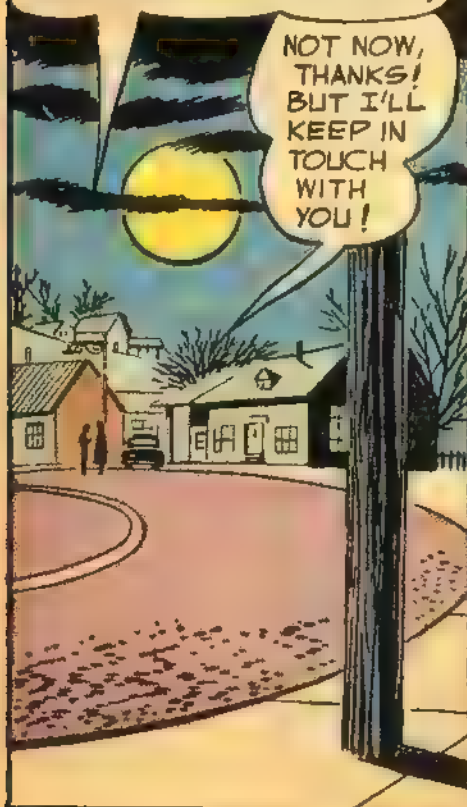
WHEN TIM ENTERS HIS HOUSE..

MAYBE IF I SNEAK BACK AND
RECOVER MY CAMERA--

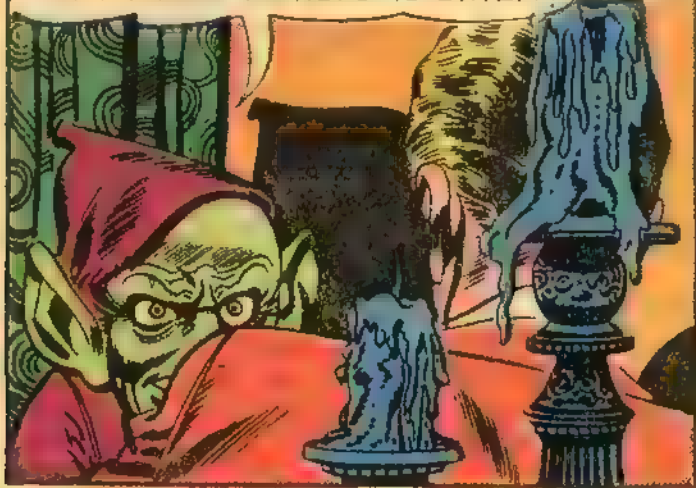
NO NEED
FOR THAT!
WE BROUGHT
YOUR CAMERA
BACK TO YOU!

HERE-- BUT DON'T BOTHER
TO LOOK FOR YOUR FILM! WE
DESTROYED IT! YOU'LL
NEVER BETRAY US BY
OUR PICTURES!

WHO ARE YOU?
WHAT SECRET
ARE YOU TRY-
ING TO KEEP
FROM US?



WHY, WE'RE EARTH PEOPLE--JUST LIKE YOU!
BUT YOUR WORLD IS RICHER THAN OURS--AND
WE ARE PREPARING TO TAKE IT FROM YOU!
HOWEVER, WE WANT NO IRON WORKS AT THE
POINT WHERE WE HOPE TO ENTER!



AS TIM
BACK-
TRACKS
TOWARD
THE FIRE-
PLACE, HE
SNATCHES
UP THE
POKER...



STAY AWAY
FROM ME,
OR I'LL--

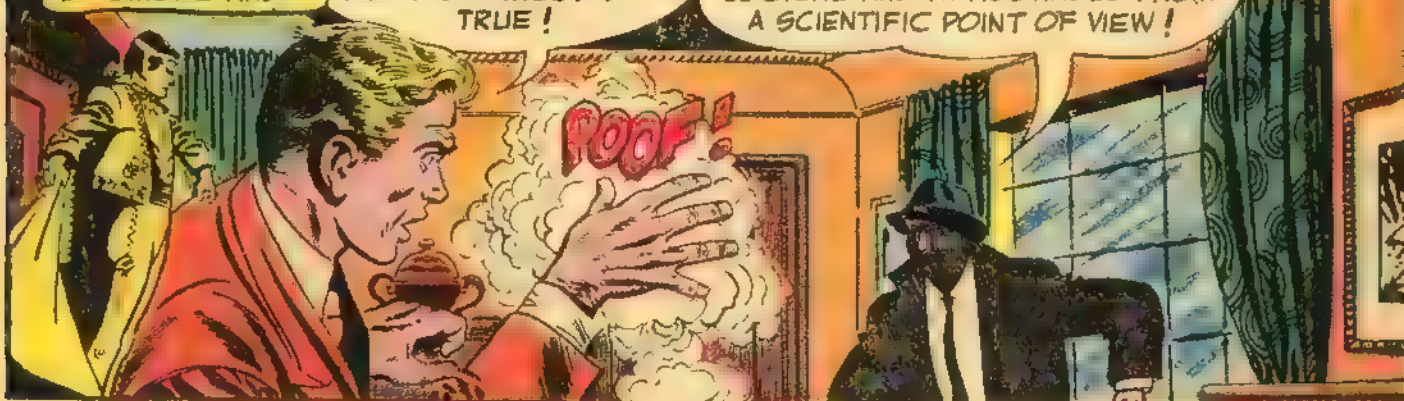
IRON! THAT
THING IS OF
IRON! DON'T--



THE NEXT INSTANT
THERE IS A SWIRL
OF SMOKE AND--

HE **VANISHED!** RIGHT
BEFORE MY EYES! THIS
ELF STORY **MUST** BE
TRUE!

OF COURSE IT'S TRUE! IT SEEMS
FANTASTIC, BUT IT'S ALL QUITE
LOGICAL AND REASONABLE FROM
A SCIENTIFIC POINT OF VIEW!



HE SAID HE WAS AN EARTHMAN!
BUT THEY'RE NOT LIKE US--
THEY HAVE STRANGE WEAPONS
AND EVIL WAYS! AND WHY DO
THEY HATE **IRON**?

I CAN
ONLY GUESS!
LISTEN--



IF THOSE ELVES ARE AFRAID
OF IRON, IT MUST BE BE-
CAUSE THE MAGNETIC FORCE
IN IRON INJURES THEIR
SENSITIVE NERVE--
ORGANIZATION!

BUT WHERE DO
THEY COME FROM?
AND WHAT DO THEY
WANT?



I'M NOT SURE... YET! THE
POINT IS, THEY'RE HERE AND
THEY'RE DANGEROUS! COME
ON AND HELP ME WITH THE
EQUIPMENT I BROUGHT!

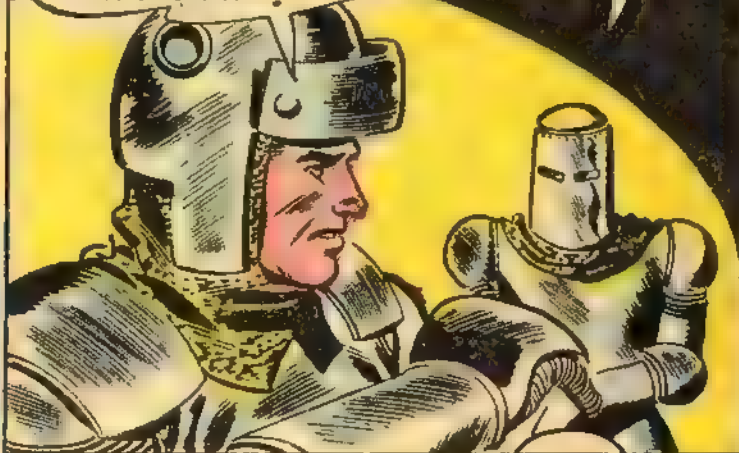


THEY'RE A COUPLE OF ANCIENT SUITS OF ARMOR! I THINK THEY'LL FIT US FAIRLY WELL WHEN WE GO BACK TO THE IRONSIDE MINE!

YOU MEAN, WE'LL WEAR ARMOR? LIKE THE KNIGHTS OF OLD FIGHTING AGAINST EVIL MAGIC?

IT ISN'T AS RIDICULOUS AS IT SOUNDS! ARMOR IS MADE OF IRON AND STEEL---IT HAS MAGNETIC VIBRATIONS---SOMETHING THE ELF-PEOPLE CAN'T STAND!

OKAY, PHANTOM STRANGER, LET'S GET DRESSED FOR ACTION!



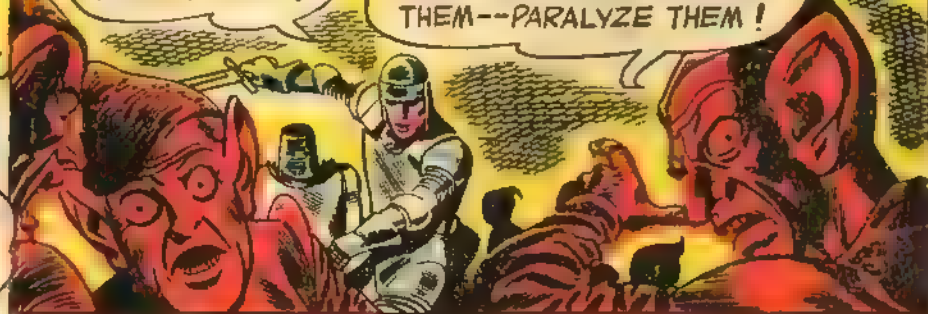
FULLY ARMORED, THE PHANTOM STRANGER AND TIM HARLEY RETURN TO THE IRONSIDE MINE...

THERE THEY ARE! THEY'RE STARTING TO DESTROY THE MINE WORKS AGAIN!

GIVE THE WORD AND WE'LL TACKLE THEM!

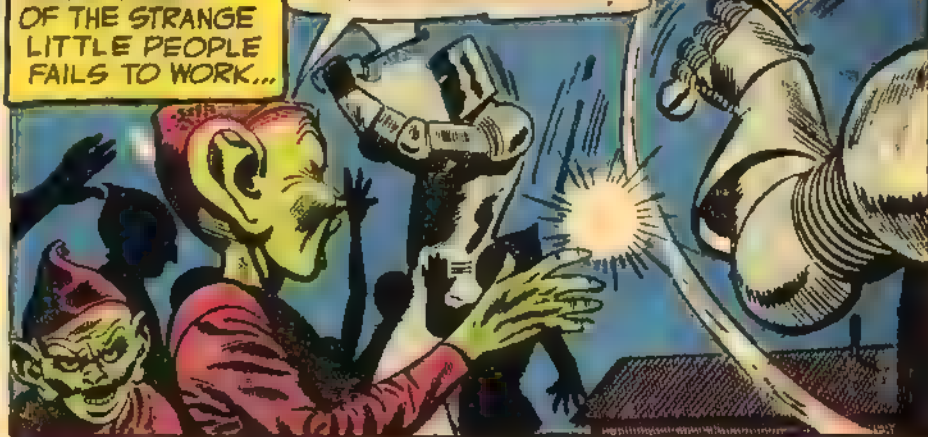
NOW--CHARGE!

TURN YOUR WAND AGAINST THEM--PARALYZE THEM!



BUT THE WEIRD POWER OF THE STRANGE LITTLE PEOPLE FAILS TO WORK...

THEY'RE CLOTHED IN IRON! IT PROTECTS THEM!



RUN! RUN!

IF I CAN FIRE THAT TANK OF OIL, FLAMES WILL SHOOT OUT AND DESTROY THEM IN THEIR IRON SHELLS!





PHANTOM STRANGER



WITH A SWIFT MOTION, THE **PHANTOM STRANGER** HURLS HIS SWORD AT THE ELF'S WAND...

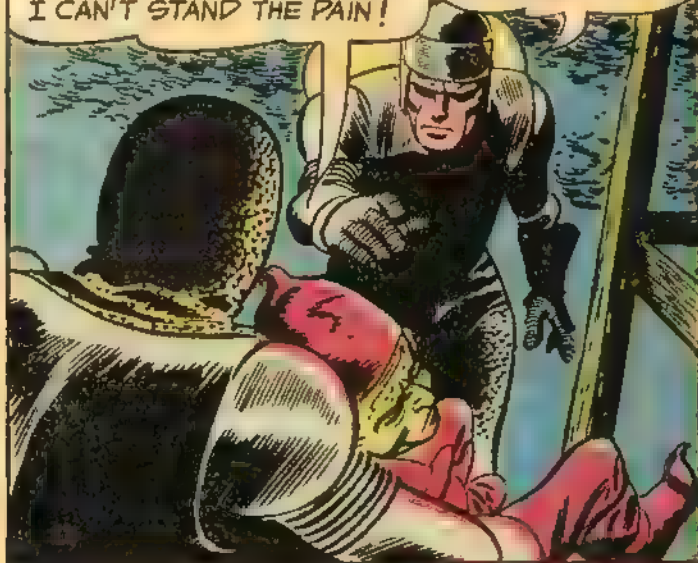


WAK!

NO, YOU DON'T!

EEYAH! DON'T TOUCH ME WITH THOSE IRON GLOVES! I CAN'T STAND THE PAIN!

FIRST--ANSWER MY QUESTIONS!



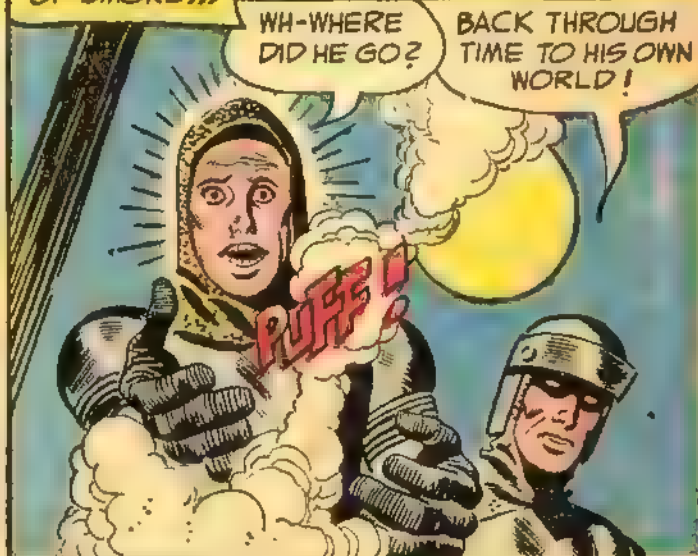
ALL I'LL TELL YOU IS THAT YOU DEFEATED US--AT **THIS TIME**! BUT THERE WILL BE ANOTHER PLACE--ANOTHER **TIME** TO INVADE THIS WORLD AND SEIZE IT!



SUDDENLY, THE ELF VANISHES IN A PUFF OF SMOKE...

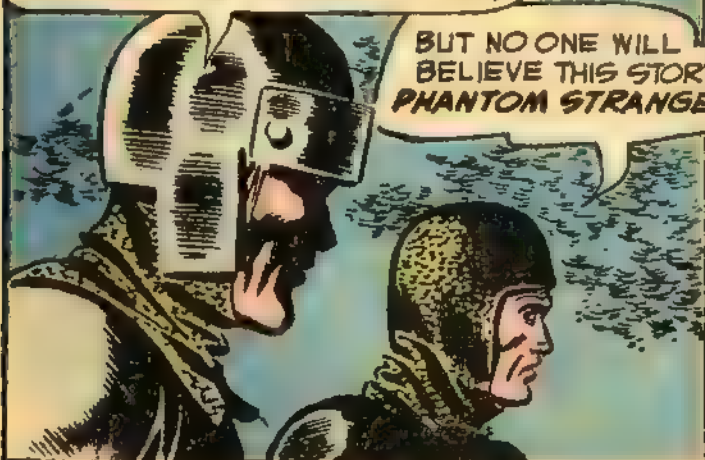
WH-WHERE DID HE GO?

BACK THROUGH TIME TO HIS OWN WORLD!

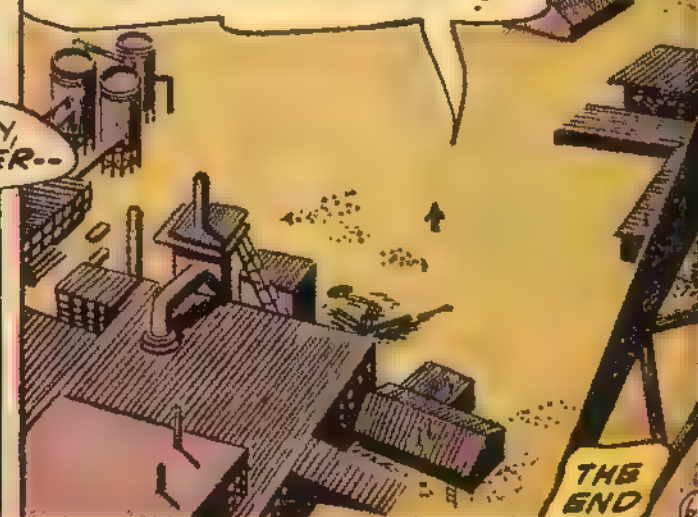


YES, THE WORLD OF THOSE STRANGE MEN IS **OUR EARTH**--THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF YEARS IN THE FUTURE! THEY MUST HAVE USED UP ALL THE IRON AND OTHER IMPORTANT ELEMENTS--AND WANTED TO COME BACK TO OUR TIME AND WORLD TO LIVE!

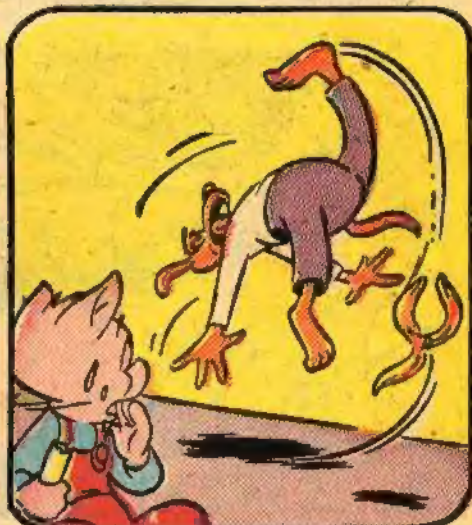
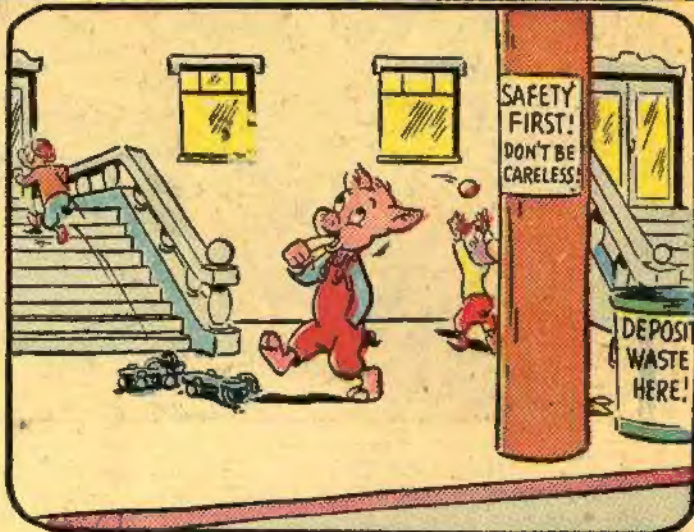
BUT NO ONE WILL BELIEVE THIS STORY, **PHANTOM STRANGER**--



-- UNLESS YOU COME BACK TO TOWN WITH ME AND TELL--WHY, THE **PHANTOM STRANGER'S** GONE TOO! WHERE DID HE VANISH --AND NOW?



PETER PORKCHOPS *learns* "CARELESSNESS IS NO JOKE!"



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